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EFFECTIVE PRAYING

HENRY W. FROST



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Effective Praying

Meditations upon the subject of
prevailing prayer

By

HENRY W. FROST, D.D.

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Prayed," "Outline Bible Studies," "Matthew Twenty-four
and the Revelation," etc.

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TO MY BELOVED
WIFE
WHOSE PRAYER LIFE HAS TAUGHT
ME MOST ABOUT THE WAY AND
WORTH OF PRAYING

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I

PRAYER DEFINED

I

PRAYER DEFINED

"After this manner — pray ye"

It is a noteworthy fact that the Bible nowhere defines prayer. It takes its possibility for granted, and it proceeds upon the assumption that men will understand what it is, at least in its simplest forms. Thus, when Jesus spoke to his disciples about their obligation to pray, he did not first define and then exhort to prayer; he simply spoke a parable to this end, "That men ought always to pray" (Luke 18 : 1). And thus when the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy about prayer, he passed by all definitions and explanations and simply said, "I will . . . that men pray everywhere" (1 Tim. 2 : 8).

There is a manifest reason for this absence of definition. In the first place, there are certain truths which cannot be defined, since infinite ideas cannot be expressed in finite terms. And in the second place, there are certain truths which do not need to be defined, since they are intuitively understood. Of the first fact no confirmation needs to be given, for the statement is self evident. Of the second, the Bible gives full confirmation by many illustrations. A

mere man, to take an example, would have begun the Scriptures with the statement that there is a God, and would have undertaken to define who and what he is; but the Spirit-inspired man began, "In the beginning God" (Gen. 1 : 1), and then went on to say what he did. A mere man, to take another example, would have made the declaration, in describing the creation of man, that his God-given life was endless and then would have sought to define eternal life; but the Spirit-inspired man simply said, "God created man in his own image" (Gen. 1 : 27), and from that time on he proceeded without definition or explanation to speak with endlessness of life in view. In other words, God has written primal truths upon the hearts of all men, and to the consciousness of these he may constantly appeal. It is thus with prayer. Men, especially Christians, may and are expected to take prayer for granted; and thus they may and are to pray.

In spite of the foregoing it is to be admitted that defining prayer has its place and value. For such a process leads to two important results; first, it clarifies the subject, and then it amplifies it. To describe prayer through a definition, therefore, is to make possible a clearer and larger view of it, both as to its nature and practice. It was with an instinctive consciousness of this fact that the disciples, though they already knew how to pray, came to Jesus with the petition, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11 : 1).

And it was with gracious recognition of the same fact that Jesus, in giving his disciples a model prayer, in a sense defined prayer, and thus gave more distinct and ample conceptions concerning it.

The practice of seeking to explain prayer by means of definitions has been a common one in the history of the church. Examples of this are found in the denominational creeds, and other examples are to be discovered in the works of those persons who have written upon the subject of prayer. We shall not refer to the creeds, for these are familiar to many and within the reach of all. But we shall refer to general religious writings, gathering from these such definitions as are not so familiar and bringing these before the reader. We must select, however, even from such definitions, quoting but a few of these and only mentioning those which are sententious in form and striking in character.

“Mohammed said, “Prayer is the pillar of religion and the key of paradise.” St. Augustine, “Prayer is our speech to God.” St. John Climacus, “Prayer is the mirror which shows us our correct portrait.” Laurenze Scupoli, “Prayer is the means by which we obtain all the graces which rain down upon us from the divine fountain of goodness and love.” George Herbert, “Prayer (is) the soul’s blood.” John Cotton, “Prayer is that incense of the heart whose fragrance smells to heaven.” Richard Baxter, “Prayer is the breath of the new creature.” The Marquis

de Renty, "Prayer is a state of modest presence before God." Jeremy Taylor, "Prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thought, the evenness of our recollection, the seat of our meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempest." Christmas Evans, "Prayer is the rope up the belfry, which, when pulled, rings the bell in heaven." Bishop Atterbury, "Prayer is the ascent of the mind toward God." Coleridge, "Prayer is an affirmation and an act, which bids eternal truths be fact." Bailey, "Prayer is the spirit speaking truth to Truth." Dr. Adams, "Prayer is want felt and help desired, with faith to obtain." Bishop Westcott, "The petitions of believers . . . are echoes, so to speak, of the Master's own words; their prayer is only some fragment of His teaching transformed into supplication." Dr. McIntyre, "Prayer is the avowal of our creature dependence." Dr. Lyman Beecher, "Prayer is the soul moving in the presence of God." Dr. Charles Hodge, "Prayer is the converse of the soul with God." Canon Farrar, "Prayer is the whole spiritual action of the soul, turned toward God as its true and adequate object." Bishop Ryle, "Prayer is the life-breath of a man's soul." Dr. Richard Sibbes, "Prayer is the messenger or ambassador of the soul." Dr. A. T. Pierson, "Prayer is the meeting of a human supplicant alone with God, for supplication and communion at the mercy seat." Dr. Austin Phelps, "Prayer is an act of friendship;

it is intercourse; an act of trust, of hope, of love." E. M. Bounds, "Prayer is the creator as well as the channel of devotion." An anonymous lady-writer, "Prayer is helplessness casting itself upon power." A little deaf and dumb girl, being asked what prayer was, wrote down, "Prayer is the wish of the heart."

We would now add to the definitions quoted above another, which is most illuminating. "Prayer," says an anonymous writer, "is the attitude of a needy and helpless soul, whose only refuge is in God." How true this is! It is this, first, because it is the attitude of the soul rather than that of the body; second, because it is the attitude of a needy and helpless soul, since experience teaches us that usually the soul does not pray unless there is some need, and that it prays best when it most realizes, in the face of need, its helplessness; and third, because the man who prays discovers, at one time or another and in things great or small, that there is only one place which is the sure and safe refuge of the soul, namely, the heart of God. The literal translation in the Chinese Bible of "God is love" is this, "God's heart assuredly is love"; and it is the perception of this fact in the time of prayer that encourages and inspires us to pray.

It will be seen, while the above definitions of prayer are true and helpful, that none of them aims fully and explicitly to set forth the teaching of the Holy Scripture concerning it. For this reason, it

seems necessary to add to the definitions given another which will do this. We would venture, therefore, to express the teaching of the Scripture, especially of the New Testament, in the following words: Prayer is worship, addressed to the Father, in the name of Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. This definition will be considered more fully in other chapters, so it is not our present purpose to dwell upon it. It will be well, however, to make some preliminary comments concerning it in order that its intent may not be misunderstood.

Let us then remark, first, that the definition is not meant to state that prayer should always be addressed to the Father and never to Christ or the Spirit, for it is to be remembered, while there are three persons in the Godhead, that there is but one God, and hence if we address one person we necessarily address the other two; and also, that it is not possible to conceive of there being any jealousy among the several persons of the Trinity; second, the definition correctly speaks of prayer as worship, for, while not all worship is prayer, all prayer is worship, since it is offered in the Spirit and its purpose is to show forth the worth of God; third, the definition is rightly expressed in view of the fact that it recognizes and acknowledges the three persons of the Trinity, there being a dispensational aspect about prayer, and this present age being a time when the threefold personality of the Godhead, in every act of

faith, is to be prominently set forth; and finally, the definition is in accordance with and expressive of the teaching of Scripture, and hence prayer of this sort is pleasing to God and informing to the one who prays.

It is to be observed, from the scriptural standpoint, that such prayer as the definition mentioned sets forth was both the practice and precept of Paul. For example, the Apostle says in the Epistle to the Ephesians, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3 : 14); and again, "Through him" (Christ) "we both" (Jews and Gentiles) "have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2 : 18). In each of these passages the substance of our definition is expressed. It is thus evident that Paul made and expected others to make the Father the objective of prayer; and it is likewise evident that he came and expected others to come to the Father through Christ and by the Spirit.

II
PRAYER ANALYZED

II

PRAYER ANALYZED

"When ye pray, say—"

Prayer, in one sense, cannot be analyzed. Prayer is worship, and worship, essentially, is unity. What, therefore, is one cannot be made more than one.

Nevertheless, in another sense prayer may be analyzed. The fact that it is worship, and the further fact that worship may be expressed in various forms, makes analysis possible. But it is to be kept in mind that this analysis is not dismembering in character, as if it set one part against another. It is, rather, articulating, revealing various parts, but uniting them in a whole. For instance, one who prays for deliverance from some trial and sorrow may, at the same time, give God thanks for the one and the other; which indicates that prayer and praise are not opposed to each other, but are two parts of the same thing. This inherent and inseparable unity in prayer must be ~~kept in~~ mind as we proceed, lest we put asunder what God has joined together. At the same time, while thinking of prayer unity, we shall need to avoid thinking of prayer uniformity. Prayer is indeed one. But also it is multiform.

There are several ways, scripturally speaking, in which prayer might be analyzed. A person, for instance, could gather together the Old Testament passages which concern prayer, add to these the New Testament passages, and from the whole produce a prayer analysis. Again, one could join together the Old and New Testament prayers as they have fallen from the lips of the great pray-ers, separate these into related parts, and so make an analysis of prayer. Again, one could take the prayer the Lord gave to his disciples (Matt. 6 : 9-13; Luke 11 : 2-4), or the one which he himself offered in the days of his flesh (John 17 : 1-26), and from the one or the other produce an analysis of prayer. All of these methods, as one has found by experience, would be informing in the highest degree.

But God has greatly simplified such long and difficult processes. For in a single passage of Scripture the Holy Spirit has anticipated our need and given us a prayer-analysis, to which all possible methods would inevitably and accurately lead. We refer to the words of Paul as he wrote concerning prayer to his young friend and disciple Timothy, these being recorded in 1 Timothy 2 : 1-8. Here in the first verse of the passage, the divinely guided apostle sums up the whole of the teaching of Scripture respecting prayer, and in doing this breaks it up into its component parts. The verse referred to reads as follows: "I exhort, that, first of all, suppli-

cations, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men"; or, to read the words more literally, I beseech, therefore, first of all, that supplications, petitions, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all men. Here then, is prayer both in its unity and diversity. Each word of the list given is prayer. At the same time, each word presents a new and additional aspect of prayer. In the several words mentioned, therefore, we find our desired analysis. And it will be seen that this analysis is a fourfold one, as follows: first, supplication; second, petition; third, intercession, and fourth, thanksgiving. It is this analysis which will now be before us. In speaking of its words, in order to make their meaning clear, it will be necessary to refer to them as they are presented to us in their original Greek form.

SUPPLICATION.—The Greek noun from which the word supplication is derived is *deēsis*. This is derived from the verb *deomai*, which means to beg. Prayer then, etymologically speaking, is begging.

It is evident from this that primal prayer is the petition of a beggar, who, as it were, sits by the wayside in rags, who is utterly destitute, and who solicits alms from a king as he passes by. Admittedly, such an one deserves nothing, and, in himself, may hope for nothing. All he may do is to hold up empty hands to receive what the king may give. Hence, he is one who casts himself utterly upon the grace of the king. If he does not receive anything, he has no

complaint to make. If he receives something, whether it be big or little, his heart may well be filled with gratitude and praise.

Such a portrayal of one who offers prayer is not a flattering one, especially to the one who prays. Any person would prefer to come as a king to a king, to stand in royal robes before a royal throne, to confer favor as well as to ask it, and to wear the mien of quality and worth. As a scriptural picture of our attitude, we should prefer to take the position of the Pharisee in the temple, who reminded himself of his various virtues and confidently commended himself to God, rather than that of the Publican, who stood afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes, smote upon his breast and said, God be propitiated to me the sinner (Luke 18 : 9-14, Greek). Nevertheless, we are to remember that it was the Publican, not the Pharisee, who went down to his house justified.

God, therefore, has made his meaning plain. Beggars, spiritually speaking, we are, and beggars we must remain; and in every act of prayer we must take the beggar's place. That is a drastic word in Hebrews 4 : 16, where we are asked to come in prayer before a throne, not of glory, or of power, but of *grace*. In other words, prayer means that we are to cast ourselves upon the God of grace, confessing ourselves sinners and undeserving, claiming and demanding nothing and seeking only such favor as an infinitely merciful God may choose to grant.

PETITION.—There is difficulty in translating into English, especially by one word, the thought which is expressed in the Greek by the second word of our analysis. The Authorized Version has translated the word, “prayers,” and the Revised Version has done the same. This, of course, is perfectly correct. At the same time, prayer can hardly be considered as a subdivision of the general subject of prayer; and also the word prayer is too large a term to use as a differentiating one, for supplication is prayer, and so is intercession, and so, in a sense, is thanksgiving. Besides this, the word prayer does not altogether express the thought which the original presents; and to miss this thought is to lose the blessing which the Spirit seeks to convey to us by the real meaning of the word.

The original word in mind is the noun *proseuchē*. This is derived from the verb *proseuchomai*. This verb is made up of two words, namely, *pros*, which means by the side of, and *euchomai*, which signifies to wish. Thus the verb presents the thought of one person wishing alongside of another, and scripturally, of a saint wishing alongside of God. The noun *proseuchē*, therefore, signifies a prayer-wish which is expressed in the presence and by the side of the heavenly Father. And this is just what prayer is.

It is to be remembered that all of us, after all, are but little children; and that, as such, we need a heavenly Father to love us and care for us. We find,

therefore, that our Spirit-born instinct is to turn to God in every time of want, trial, temptation and sorrow, and to pour into his sympathetic ear all of our desires. How beautifully this comes out in the following words: "And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus" (Matt. 14 : 12). John the Baptist was dead; the disciples had buried his headless body and had thus stood face to face with the frightful issue of godless persecution; the shadow of the cross had in this way fallen across their path and they had felt its chill; in consequence of this, they were appalled and were driven to seek such solace and help as only God could give;— "and they went and told Jesus!" For these disciples, intuitively, prayer was breathing out the wish of the heart in the presence of another; and that other to them was none other than Jesus, the Lord.

One of my boys, many years ago, on a spring-time day, came home from school with his eyes blackened. I was surprised, for the lad, though not a coward, was not contentious. But remembering some of my own boyhood experiences, I asked him if he had been fighting. He promptly answered, "No, father"; and he then explained that he had been playing baseball, that he had been catching behind the bat, and that the fellow at the plate had drawn his bat too far back and had struck him across the eyes. He then quietly remarked, "Father, I wish I

had a baseball mask." Now, that boy was captain of his baseball team; he had been in the fall the captain of his football team; he had recently won several races in the school athletic meet, and finally, he had stood first in his class. It did not take me long, under these circumstances and especially with his blackened eyes before me, to determine to give my son a mask. So, a day or two later, we went together to Wanamaker's, I selected the best mask I could find, and soon it was my boy's glad and proud possession. As we stood waiting for the mask to be wrapped up, I saw the lad's gaze fixed upon a beautiful baseball in the show case. Thereupon, I asked him if he would like to have it. He immediately replied, "Oh, no, father; you have bought enough." At this, touched both by his desire and thoughtfulness, I made up my mind that also he should have the ball. And I bought it for him. Now mark. In the one case, my son had stood beside me and said, "I wish." In the other, he had stood beside me and simply looked his wish. But in both cases, he had received his heart's desire. Evidently then, it is a good thing to wish alongside of another, particularly if that other is a father.

"They went and told Jesus." What better thing in their sorrow could the disciples have done? And what better thing can we do, not only in our sorrows but also in our joys? We are not orphans, but have a Father in heaven. And this Father delights to have us act as children and thus take advantage of

his fatherhood. For he wants us near his person, and, being near, he longs to have us express our desires, whatever they may be. This makes prayer beautifully simple. It also makes it wonderfully effective. For the Father in heaven is not like human fathers, a poor lot at the best. On the contrary, he is infinitely good and loving and generous, and is ever ready to grant to us our requests. This surely is what Jesus meant when he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever things ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16 : 23). Prayer then, according to the second division of our analysis, is standing at the side of God, there wishing our wishes, and thus, making our petitions, in things great and small, according to life's various needs.

INTERCESSION.—The Greek word from which the word intercession is derived is *enteuxis*, which comes from the verb, *entugchanō*, which means to chance upon, to confer with, and thus, to deal with. The noun, therefore, signifies an interview, and such a one as leads to supplication. It is in this last sense that the word presents the thought of a person interceding in behalf of another.

According to the Scripture, there are three intercessors. First, Christ is one, he interceding between God and the saint in respect to sin and sins (Rom. 8 : 34; Heb. 7 : 25). Second, the Holy Spirit is one, he interceding between God and the saint

in respect to the manifestation of spiritual life, including the offering of prayer (Rom. 8 : 26, 27). And third, the saint is one, he interceding between God and man, in respect to another's salvation or spiritual development (1 Tim. 2 : 1-6). Thus it is, as seen in this last case, that the Christian is joined to Christ and the Spirit in a holy triad of interceders, the work of the praying saint being essential for the salvation of the unsaved and the spiritual uplift of the saved. This is a high position for God to grant to men of flesh and blood, and, manifestly, it is a sacred office for such to occupy.

It will be seen by reference to the passages where Christians are spoken of as intercessors (1 Tim. 2 : 1-6) that their service of intercession is essentially and altogether altruistic. Petition may rightfully be egotistic in desire and expression, for it is our privilege to pray to God in our own behalf, and in doing so to express our personal and even private desires before him. But when we come to intercession, we act as an intermediary between God and man, and thus, in man's behalf. Intercession, therefore, is a spiritual advance upon petition, for it brings us into the larger and more unselfish aspects of prayer experience, where we lose sight of self and are taken up with the affairs of God and our fellowmen.

With this last thought in mind, how significant it is that this word of our analysis means, at its root, an interview, and that of a formal kind. In other words,

the Christian, at the time of intercession, is given the privilege of making an appointment with God, of having serious and prolonged converse with him, and then of pleading for the manifestation of divine compassion upon sinners and saints alike. Intercession, therefore, is a most holy and solemn act; and it is one of infinite dignity in respect to the intercessor. Its importance and worth may be realized when one remembers this, that God has sovereignly ordained that he will only save and sanctify souls as some intercessor pleads with him for them. It was thus with Abraham and Lot (Gen. 19 : 1-29). It was thus with Moses and his people (Ex. 32 : 1-14). It was thus with Paul and Israel (Rom. 9 : 1-3; 10 : 1). And it will ever be thus with ourselves as related to the needy sons of men (1 Tim. 2 : 1-4). /

➤ **THANKSGIVING.**—The fourth and last word of our analysis is thanksgiving. It is from the Greek noun *eucharistia*. This word is derived from the adverb *eu*, which means well, and the verb *charizomai*, which signifies to grant as a favor, and which has as a root the noun *charis*, which signifies grace. The noun *eucharistia*, therefore, presents the thought of a person being well favored, which leads to the thought of thanksgiving, since, ideally, the one who is well favored is the one who is full of gratitude and praise. It is with these thoughts in mind that scholarly saints, with true spiritual instinct, have called the Lord's supper the eucharist, for in the celebration of this

holy feast Christians remind themselves of the favor which God has bestowed upon them, and then, as they eat the bread and drink the wine, they express their gratitude to him in adoring praise.

The word which is before us, therefore, is, from an etymological standpoint, an interesting one, and, from a spiritual standpoint, a most instructive one. What man on earth, be he learned or ignorant, be he rich or poor, be he well or sick, be he joyful or sorrowful, is so well-favored as the Christian? A saint in a hovel is more prosperous than a sinner in a palace; and a saint in physical suffering and spiritual sorrow is better off than a sinner in the midst of good health and natural joy. The fact of the matter is, the Christian, by reason of his salvation, is the only well-favored man amongst men, for his blessing is God-given, it reaches the soul, it ever increases and it abides forever. The Christian then, is the one who pre-eminently has occasion for gratitude, and he is called upon to express this in every time of worshipful prayer. That great praiser, Paul, had learned this secret, deeply and unforgettably. Hence it is that he wrote of praise in this wise: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4 : 6); and again, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5 : 18); and again, "Giving thanks always for all things unto

God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5 : 20).

There is a German legend which, in substance, is as follows: God desired, on a certain day, to have gathered all of earth's prayer and praise. So he called to him the prayer angel and the praise angel. The prayer angel came with a large basket in his hands, thinking he would hear much prayer among the saints which he could gather up. The praise angel came with a much larger basket, thinking that the praise would far exceed the prayer. So the two angels were sent from heaven to earth upon their mission, and they were busy all day in seeking for prayer and praise. By evening the prayer basket was full to overflowing. But, alas, the great praise basket was almost empty! And it is said, as the two angels flew heavenward that night, while joy was upon the face of the prayer angel, there was seen upon the face of the praise angel a look of sorrow and the glint of a tear.

I wonder if the prayer and praise angels should suddenly come to our door some day what they would hear, prayer or praise! It should be prayer. Also, it should be praise. And as between the two, the praise should immeasurably exceed the prayer. And it is this consummation of experience to which our analysis leads us. In supplication, we ask; in desire, we ask; in intercession, we ask; but in thanksgiving we do not ask — we give!

III

PRAYER TO THE FATHER

III

PRAYER TO THE FATHER

"Our Father which art in heaven"

Prayer to the Father is a New Testament revelation, and therefore a New Testament experience. It is true that the Old Testament sets forth God as a Father. This presentation, however, is not so much in respect to the individual as to the Jewish nation; and it is never as related to prayer. But in the New Testament it is quite otherwise.

In confirmation of the above statements the following is to be noted. In the Old Testament the word Father, as connected with God, occurs fifteen times and is found in six books. In the New Testament it occurs two hundred and fifty times and is found in twenty-six books, that is in every book save one (3 John). In addition, the word in the Old Testament is generally connected with the thought of providence or redemption; while, in the New Testament, it is generally associated with that of relationship and fellowship, and particularly with prayer. It will be seen that this comparison, as between the Old and New Testaments, reveals a remarkable progress of testimony; and it is evident that it indicates a

great advance in the revelation of divine grace and human privilege. In other words, God gave to the church, in respect to his fatherhood and as compared with Israel, an altogether new gift, which introduced Christians to special and priceless privileges. And this new order of things had special relationship to the practice of prayer.

To bring out this last thought more clearly, we would call attention to the manner in which the Old Testament saints addressed God and used his name and titles. The Levites prayed thus: "Our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God" (Neh. 9 : 32). Nehemiah prayed thus: "O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God" (Neh. 1 : 5). And Daniel prayed thus: "O Lord, the great and dreadful God" (Dan. 9 : 4).

Now these Old Testament saints were great pray-ers, for they offered prayer frequently, importunately and effectively. Moreover, they were very reverent in prayer, as the words quoted attest, and in this they are to be imitated by us. But who, in these days of ours, would think of addressing God in prayer as they did? Their language is far removed from us, so much so that we never reproduce it and find it hard to understand how they used the words which they did. Daniel is one to whom God spoke while he was in the act of prayer, saying, "Thou art greatly beloved" (Dan. 9 : 23); nevertheless, the prophet did not venture to address God

other than in such words as these: "O Lord"; "O my God"; and "O Lord, the great and dreadful God" (Dan. 9 : 16, 18, 4). All of this signifies that a great change in prayer experience, between Old and New Testament times, has taken place. The distant has become the near; the fearsome has become the confident; the hesitant has become the fervent; and the formal has become the familiar. These are mighty spiritual mutations, and it will be well for us to see how they were brought to pass.

The divine Spirit prophesied through the prophet Isaiah that the Messiah, when he should come, would bear five distinctive and differentiating names, "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9 : 6). It is to be observed that one of these names was to be "The everlasting Father," which name identified the second person of the Trinity with the first, and set forth the fact that the Son was to be the revelation of the Father. Moreover, when Christ was on earth, he claimed to be the promised Messiah (John 4 : 25, 26), and he substantiated this claim by saying to Philip that if the disciples had known him they would have known the Father also, and that he that had seen him had seen the Father (John 14 : 7-9). These two statements make it clear that Christ came, among other things, not so much to reveal God — who had been revealed from the beginning — as to make a new and final revelation of God as a Father.

In addition, Jesus, in the days of his flesh, occupied a peculiar relationship to the heavenly Father and expressed this in characteristic and unmistakable ways. He lived in a companionship with the Father which no man, before or since, has been able to attain to or enjoy (John 10 : 30; 17 : 1-5); and he used phraseology as related to the Father which no other person had ever dared to employ (John 5 : 17, 18, R. V.; 16 : 28; 17 : 24-26).

This last fact, which is an important one in connection with our subject, becomes particularly plain when the prayers of our Lord are considered. Observing these, it becomes evident that Christ never addressed God as the Old Testament saints had done nor as the New Testament saints were doing, but always separately and uniquely, with the word "Father" upon his lips: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11 : 25, 26); "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son that thy Son also may glorify thee" (John 17 : 1); "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was" (John 17 : 5); "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am" (John 17 : 24); "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee" (Mark 14 : 36); "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from

me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22 : 42); "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23 : 34); "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23 : 46). Once he cried, "My God, my God" (Mark 15 : 34), at the time he was made sin for us who knew no sin (2 Cor. 5 : 21). But this he did only once, whereupon, the wrath having been borne, he reverted to the old name of Father, saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23 : 46). The name Father then, was the one which Christ familiarly used, in living and dying, and which, evidently, was exceedingly precious to him. As a striking proof of this, it is a fact that out of the two hundred and fifty times the name occurs in the New Testament, one hundred and sixty-seven of these are found in the utterances of Jesus, while he talked with God and men.

All of this is impressive, as revealing the relationship which Christ had with his Father. But it is exceeded by a fact which is to be added to it, namely, that Christ made it possible for his disciples to come into the same relationship with God — apart from deity — which he occupied, and hence, to use the same terms in talk and prayer which he used. The Old Testament saints had made great advancement in divine attainments, especially in the intercourse of prayer. But it was reserved for New Testament saints to be brought into the holy of holies in respect

to fellowship with God and worship of him. And in no way, except in the matters of atonement and the gift of the Spirit, did Christ make this more possible, enjoyable and potential than in committing unto them the use of the name which he himself had so sacredly and lovingly used, that of Father.

The teaching of Christ in the days of his flesh which brought these results to pass became increasingly plain and persistent. He began, in response to the expressed desire of his disciples, by giving them a model prayer, and, in doing this, raised his hearers to new and unanticipated heights of prayer-experience by its matchless beginning, "Our Father which art in heaven" (Matt. 6 : 9-13). At a later time, he led his hearers to greater heights of prayer-opportunity by saying, "In that day ye shall ask me nothing; Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16 : 23). And at a still later time, he brought his disciples to the utmost heights of prayer-privilege by teaching them as follows, "At that day ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you" (John 16 : 26, 27). Higher than this in prayer he could not lead his disciples, for he had brought them to the person and into the heart of God. His exhortation had been to say, "Our Father" (Matt. 6 : 9; John 16 : 23); his assurance was, "The Father himself loveth you" (John 16 : 27). Hav-

ing thus privileged and enticed his followers, he died on Calvary's cross, rose on high and sent down the Spirit from his Father's throne in order to make possible for them what he had graciously promised to them. He had indeed opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers; and he had done this, in addition to other means to the same end, by revealing the Father and holding up him as faith's winsome objective in the practice of prayer.

We are better prepared now to understand how it came to pass that the New Testament saints left the Old Testament prayer-phraseology behind them, and came to use, whether in petition or praise, entirely new terms in addressing God; for manifestly, the life, exhortations and prayers of Christ had transformed their prayer lives. Thereafter, if Paul prayed, he bowed his knees "unto the Father" (Eph. 3 : 14). If he gave thanks, it was "unto God and the Father" (Eph. 5 : 20; Col. 1 : 3, 12; 3 : 17). If he adored it was "unto God and our Father" (Phil. 4 : 20). And if, in the spirit of prayer, he expressed the wish for a blessing upon those he loved, it was always as "from God our Father" (Rom. 1 : 7; 1 Cor. 1 : 3; 2 Cor. 1 : 2; Gal. 1 : 3; Eph. 1 : 2, 17; Phil. 1 : 2; Col. 1 : 2; 1 Thess. 1 : 1; 2 Thess. 1 : 2; 1 Tim. 1 : 2; Titus 1 : 4; Philem. 3). James, too, when he blessed God addressed his praise to the Father (Jas. 3 : 9). Peter also did the same (1 Pet. 1 : 3). John set forth the fact that

our fellowship, inclusive of prayer, was not only with Christ, but also "with the Father" (1 John 1 : 3); and this disciple, who had drunk so deep of the spirit of Christ, dwelt upon the name Father almost as did his Master, using the word in his epistles fully seventeen times (1 John 1 : 2, 3; 2 : 1, 13, 15, 16, 22, 23, 23, 24; 3 : 1; 4 : 14; 5 : 7; 2 John 3, 3, 4, 9). And this same great and beloved apostle, in his last writing, voiced the praise of all the church and of all time by ascribing praise to Christ for making us priests "unto God and his Father" (Rev. 1 : 5, 6). Thus we see that this matchless name came, at last, to express man's highest conception of God, and to be used by the saints, especially in prayer, frequently, and with infinite reverence, tenderness and gratitude.

It is to be observed, in respect to God's fatherhood, that what Christ began the Holy Spirit has always continued. It was Christ's long effort, in the days of his flesh, to lead those who prayed into the presence of the Father. It has been the Holy Spirit's longer effort to lead such worshipers into the presence of the same divine Person. How beautifully this work of the Holy Spirit is displayed by comparing two of Paul's sayings: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4 : 6); "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of

Jesus — Mark 14:36

adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

Be it noted that in the first instance the Spirit cries, "Abba, Father"; and in the second, we cry, "Abba, Father." It is as if a mother, brooding over her child, might say to him, "Say father, darling," and might repeat the lesson over and over, until the child-mind had understood and the child-lips had framed the word which the mother-heart was longing and waiting to hear. It is indeed thus

with God and us. In every venture of faith, in every thrill of joy, in every throb of sorrow, and thus, in every act of prayer, the tenderly brooding Spirit is ever whispering to our souls, "Say Abba, Father!"

For well he knows, if we may but learn to use with understanding and purpose this blessed name, that all life, including all prayer-life, will immediately and forever be transformed.

Some thirty and more years ago, I moved, with my family, from Attica, in western New York, to Toronto, Ontario, there to begin and maintain the work of the China Inland Mission in North America. Establishing our home in a small house, on Shuter Street, and our office in the Christian Institute Building, on Richmond Street, we invited into our home some twenty young men and women to train and test for their service in China. It was a work of faith as well as a labor of love, for we had little money to use in providing for so large a family. And as the passing days added but small

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Abba

Father

mother
Spirit

amounts to our supply, it was not long before the little became less and the less became nothing.

It was a new experience with me to be called upon to trust God without a bank account, and I have to confess that my faith utterly failed under the test. One morning, therefore, I turned into my office with a heavy heart, especially as the mail which I had just received had brought me only one or two letters and these without remittances for the Mission. Under these circumstances, I felt that the burden was too much for me — as indeed it was — and that I must find relief of some sort, I hardly knew how or where. Just then I stepped to the scriptural block-calendar which hung on the wall by my desk, tore off the leaf for the previous day and then read the text for that day. The words which greeted me were these: "Your Father knoweth." How they startled me. "Father?" "Father?" Had I then a Father in heaven? And did he know? And did he care? And would he provide for me, for mine, and for all those young men and women in the Mission Home? The words seemed to imply it. And as I continued to look at the text, I was increasingly encouraged, for that word, "Father," appeared to enlarge and glow with light. Yes, I had a Father. He did know. He did care. He would provide. My heart now was entirely satisfied, and, this being the case, I knelt in my office and said my prayers as simply as a child, repeating the new-found word,

Father, over and over again. The next mail brought us goodly supplies, and not one of us starved.

It is a wonderful thing to have a Father in heaven, and to be able to say, in every time of need, "Our Father!" Lord Tennyson, his son tells us, used to breathe in the crises of his life, this prayer, "O, Thou Infinite — Amen!" But it is not too much to affirm that the best prayer the soul may breathe, especially when trial and sorrow come and the heart breaks, is this, "O my Father — Amen!" For in things great or small, important or unimportant, calming or disturbing, encouraging or foreboding, one may ever remember that the Father in heaven has an eye to see, a heart to love, and a hand to act; and with such a One upon heaven's throne, about all any saint ever needs to do is to remind him of the name which he bears, and then to say, Amen, to all that he is and all that he may do.

IV

PRAYER IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

IV

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"Hallowed be thy name"

The Old Testament saints did not pray in the name of Christ, at least consciously. They did actually, for as they worshiped they stood behind the altar and its sacrifice, and that altar, typically, was the cross, and that sacrifice, typically, was Christ. But the meaning of this, while plain to God in heaven, was undoubtedly obscure to worshipers on earth, the main thing to these being obedience to the heavenly command to offer sacrifice and belief that God would accept of the offering and the offerer. We may say here, therefore, as we said in the previous chapter concerning prayer to the Father, that prayer in the name of Christ is a New Testament revelation and experience.

The teaching of Christ, while he was on earth, concerning the use of his name in prayer was pronounced and explicit. He iterated and reiterated the fact that his name was to be attached to all petitions presented to the Father; and he multiplied his promises to any and all who would thus use his name. This teaching casts light upon the place which Jesus was

conscious of occupying before God and men, since it carries with it the claim of divine position and power. For in instructing his disciples to use his name he implied that he was very God, that he had all power in heaven and on earth, and that this last included access to God and the obtaining from him anything and everything which the Father could and would give. With such thoughts in mind, it will be well to review some of Christ's utterances wherein he spoke of his name and its value in prayer.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14 : 13). "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14 : 14). "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15 : 16). "In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16 : 23). "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16 : 24). "At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16 : 26, 27). These verses, certainly, make large claims

and contain mighty promises; and all, it will be observed, are connected with the use of the name. Evidently, Christ knew that he was giving to the saints a divine talisman, which would prove effective at all times and in all circumstances, and which would open the heart and hand of even so august a one as God. What love it was which led him to commit to his followers a trust so sacred and potential as this!

The New Testament saints, speaking generally, were slow to learn the spiritual lessons which Christ had sought to teach them. But it seems clear that they quickly laid hold of the privilege which he had granted to them in respect to the use of his name. This, however, was not so much the case while Jesus was on earth. During that time, apparently, they went direct to him for almost all things. When Peter needed money for the taxes, he turned to Jesus for it (Matt. 17 : 24-27); and we can readily imagine that this was only one of many instances of the same kind, this being the explanation of the Master's words when he said, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name" (John 16 : 24). But after Christ had ascended on high the disciples used his name often and boldly, and prevailed before God and men by means of its potency.

The following scriptures give general evidence of the foregoing. Peter said that whosoever should call "on the name of the Lord should be saved"

(Acts 2 : 21 ; 10 : 43) ; that it was in the "name of Jesus of Nazareth" that believers should be baptized (Acts 2 : 38 ; 10 : 48) ; that it was in the "name of Jesus of Nazareth" that the lame man was healed (Acts 3 : 6, 16 ; 4 : 7-10) ; that there is none other "name given among men," whereby men must be saved (Acts 4 : 12) ; and that the signs and wonders which had occurred had been done "by the name" (Acts 4 : 30). James affirmed that God was visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people "for his name" (Acts 15 : 4). Barnabas said that Paul from the first preached "in the name of Jesus" (Acts 9 : 27) ; and the Spirit declared that he "spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 9 : 29). Paul commanded the evil spirit to come out of the soothsaying woman "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 16 : 18). He declared that whosoever should call "upon the name of the Lord" should be saved (Rom. 10 : 13) ; that justification and sanctification came "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 6 : 11) ; that all thanksgiving was to be offered "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5 : 20) ; that God had given Christ a "name which is above every name" and that it was "at the name of Jesus" that every knee should bow and tongue confess (Phil. 2 : 9, 10) ; that all things should be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3 : 17) ; and that every one that "nameth the name of Christ" should depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2 : 19). John

declared that God's commandment was that men should believe "on the name of his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 3 : 23); that his letters were written that saints might believe "on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5 : 13); that Christ's final and conquering "name" is to be "The Word of God" and "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19 : 13, 16); and that the highest rewarding of the saints in glory will be this, that they shall see Christ's face and wear "his name" in their foreheads (Rev. 22 : 4). Thus evidently the name of Christ was highly esteemed by the apostles and early disciples and was used by them frequently before God and men in various relationships and with mighty power. Jesus, as judged by his teaching, meant that this should be so; and also that the use of his name should be definitely, closely, and continuously connected with the act and practice of prayer.

Having reviewed, as above, the scriptural teaching in regard to the use of Christ's name, we may well seek to understand why it is that Christ placed such a high value upon it and why he said that its mention before God would prove prevailing in its effect. In doing this, we shall be obliged first to refer to the use of names from a general and human standpoint. After this we may speak concerning the name of Christ from a particular and divine standpoint.

First, a name signifies personality, for names are given to distinguish between individuals, and hence

each name stands for the person who bears that name. Second, a name signifies a person's character, for the name which designates a person stands also for what that person is, which is his character whether it be good or bad. Third, a name signifies a person's life-work, or life-history, for the name which represents the person and what he is, represents also what he has done, both right and wrong. Fourth, a name signifies a person's reputation before men, for since a man's name stands for his personality, character and life-work, it also indicates his reputation as thus established in the minds of those who have known him. And lastly, a person's name signifies the individual's standing before God, for since the name represents the man, what he is, what he has done, and the impression upon lives which he has made, it comes to represent the man as God sees him and as he must judge him. This last, it will be seen, gives significance to the saying of Christ, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Rev. 3 : 5).

It is plain from the above that names are not to be lightly considered. Indeed, a little thought upon the subject will show that a name is a weighty matter, even from a commonplace standpoint, and that it becomes greatly more important when it is regarded from God's point of view. To illustrate and con-

firm this, let us take two highly historic names, those of Nero and Paul. The mere mention of these names sets in motion within us a tide of thought and sentiment. And if we stop to analyze our thoughts we shall discover that they are unconsciously proceeding on the line of the analysis just given; for the names suggest to us, from two opposite standpoints, personality, character, life-history, reputation, and final judgment. Now if this is true of us, who see and think finitely, what must be true of God, who sees and thinks infinitely? Among men, therefore, and especially with God, a name is potential beyond any one's power to describe it. The inspired Solomon clearly foresaw this. As to the wicked he said, "The name of the wicked shall rot" (Prov. 10 : 7); and, as to the righteous he said, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" (Prov. 22 : 1).

That God has occupied his mind with the significance of names is apparent to those who have read the Scriptures with any degree of care. He named the first man Adam, which means red, because he was made from the red earth, or, possibly, because he was ruddy of countenance. He found a man named Abram, which means exalted father, and purposing to make him the head of a new race he changed his name to Abraham, which means a father of a multitude. He saw a woman at Abram's side named Sarai, which means contentious, and in-

tending to make her a worthy consort of Abraham, he changed her name to Sarah, which means a princess. He met a man named Jacob, which means contender, and having wrestled with him and utterly overcome him, he gave him the name of Israel, which means he rules as God. He foresaw a child who was to be the greatest of all the prophets and he gave him the name of John, which means God-favored. And when Christ saw a weakling named Simon Bar-jona, he, intending to transform his life, gave him a new name, and so called him Peter, which means a rock. In other words, God's thought has been much upon the significance of names, and he has desired that his people should have the right ones, and also, that, having them, they should wear them rightly and worthily. Indeed, we may judge from the way in which God has used names that his ideal is this; that there should be an equivalent between a man and his name; that is, that the name should fitly represent the man and the man the name.

Men in the Old Testament times got a glimpse of the foregoing truths and aimed, in given cases, at their application in human life. Eve, remembering the promise which God had made that her seed should bruise the serpent's head, called her first-born child, supposing him to be that seed, Cain, which means acquisition, for she said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord" (Gen. 4 : 1). Abraham

called his son Isaac, which means, let him laugh, for he desired to give expression to his joy in having at last the promised heir and to prophesy his son's joy as he should come to inherit the promises of God. Moses, when he named the son which was born to him in the land of Midian, called him Gershom, which means a stranger here, because he desired to signify the position which he had taken by faith in respect to Egypt and which his son was to occupy with him as a stranger and pilgrim upon the earth. And to such scriptural examples might be added instances in more recent times when godly parents have named their children after noble persons, in the prayerful hope that the name given might prove prophetic, and also that it might have its measure of influence upon the character of the child who should bear it. But a comparison of the instances mentioned, where God has given a name and where man has given one, shows how far short of God's effort man's has come. Thus and otherwise it is evident that only God is able to fit the name to the man, and then fit the man to the name. For reasons of his own God has never largely used his right in this direction. But it is important to remember that it has always been within his privilege and power to do this and that he has given promise that he will do it in the world to come; for Christ declares that in that place each overcomer will be given "a new name," which, without doubt, will

perfectly set forth what the saint is in his own personality and also in God's grace and rewarding (Rev. 2 : 17).

When we come to consider the names of Christ, it must be kept in mind that all of the names of God are also the names of his Son, this being the case because God and Christ are one (John 10 : 30). It might be thought that the word Father, as related to God, would be an exception to this. But the fact that the inspired Isaiah definitely gives to Christ the name "Everlasting Father" (Isa. 9 : 6) proves that there is no exception whatever. If, therefore, we were to pursue a full study of the names of Christ we should have to consider the whole of Scripture, and should have to gather from it all of the divine titles. This would prove too large and exhaustive a study for our present undertaking, and hence we shall content ourselves with something more within our reach. In short, we shall confine ourselves to the mentioning of those names which unmistakably have direct and manifest reference to Christ. But before we pass to this part of our subject, it will be well to fix in our minds two facts: first, that it would take the sum total of the divine names to set forth adequately what Christ is; and second, that what would be a difficult task for us is the simplest possible one for God. While, therefore, we may in prayer only think and mention one of Christ's names, it is plain that God immediately thinks of all of

them, that is, he thinks of the whole Christ as represented by all of his divine titles.

A careful search of the Old and New Testaments, as various persons have made this, has revealed the fact that the Spirit has given therein to Christ just one hundred and forty-three names. Forty-three of these are found in the Old Testament and one hundred in the New. We could wish that we might present to the eye the complete list of these titles, for the sight of them in collective form and order would enlarge our conception of Christ and our admiration of his person. But we must content ourselves with an abbreviated list. In doing this, we present the names in alphabetical order, as is usually done, and mention only those which are best known and most suggestive:

Advocate; Almighty; Alpha and Omega; Apostle; Beloved; Bishop; Blessed and only Potentate; Bridegroom; Brightness of the Father's Glory; Captain of the Lord's Host; Captain of our Salvation; Christ; Counsellor; Days-man; Deliverer; Desire of all Nations; Emmanuel; Everlasting Father; Faithful Witness; First-begotten; First-born; First and Last; God; Good Shepherd; Great Shepherd; Governor; Head of the Church; High-priest; Holy One; Image of God; Jehovah; Jesus; Judge; King; King of Israel; King of Nations; King of Kings; Lamb of God; Law-giver; Leader; Lion of the Tribe of Judah; Lord; Lord of Lords; Lord of All; Lord

of Glory; Master; Mediator; Messiah; Mighty God; Nazarene; Only-begotten; Potentate; Physician; Prince; Prince of Life; Prince of Peace; Prophet; Redeemer; Rock; Saviour; Servant; Shepherd; Son of God; Son of Man; Truth; Wonderful; Word; Word of God; and Word of Life.

It is thus that the Spirit sets forth the perfections of Christ, seeking through names to convey to human minds his manifold characteristics and his adaptiveness to the needs of men in all times, places, and conditions. What other person than he has ever worn so many titles? And what other person than he can be thought of as being deserving of them? And yet so unique and great is Christ's person that we find ourselves able to apply all such titles to him without hesitation as being his most just due. This in itself is remarkable. But what is more remarkable is this, that God who sees the person of Christ as we cannot, and who knows the high meaning of his names as we do not, applies each and all of these, together with all other possible appellations, to the Son of his love as but the imperfect effort of finite language to express the inexpressible perfection of his limitless being. To mention the names of Christ before God means much to the worshiper. But manifestly, it means infinitely more to God.

If we had a complete list of Christ's names before us, we should see that it would lend itself to various classifications. First, there would be the

division between the Old and New Testament names. Second, there would be the distinction between those names which suggest Christ's attributes and those which set forth his activities. And third, it would become evident that certain names are historical and that other names are prophetic. But there is an additional classification which is more comprehensive than these and which will help us better to understand what the offering of the name of Christ before God signifies. This classification is that which may be made under the names of Prophet, Priest and King. If any one, with this subdivision in mind, will turn back to the list of names given, he will discover that each one of the names — and the same would be true of the complete list — may be placed with approximate exactness under one or another of these three titles. In other words, God sent Christ to be a Prophet, a Priest and a King, and he has given to him names which declare and describe him in this threefold character and relationship. Thus it follows that the mentioning of the names of Christ before God reminds him of his Son's personality, his official standing, and his office-work, and this, as related to the past, the present, and the future. There is, therefore, the eternal element in the names of Christ. And above all, there is in them the element of an eternal meritoriousness. This is the meaning in the passage in Paul's letter to the Philippians: "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a

name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (2 : 9-11).

Among the names which God has given to his Son there are five, as recorded in the New Testament, which stand forth prominently and pre-eminently. These have already been mentioned, but we shall now speak separately of them.

SON OF MAN.—The phrase in the Greek is *Huios tou anthrōpou*, which is literally, The Son of the Man. This name sets forth Christ in his human nature and as identified, except for sin, with humanity at large (Luke 3 : 23, 38; Heb. 2 : 14-18; 4 : 15). It implies his being born of a woman (Gal. 4 : 4; Heb. 2 : 14-18), and, on account of an infinitely deserved right (Phil. 2 : 6-11), his being the federal head of the human race (Rom. 5 : 12-21). It also implies, by reason of headship, his right to judge all other members of the race, which God declares he will do (Matt. 13 : 41-43; 25 : 31, 32; John 5 : 27; Acts 17 : 31). Thus, as Son of Man, Christ is contrasted with the "first man" and the "first Adam," he being the "second man" and the "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15 : 45-47). In God's sight, therefore, he is the perfect Man; indeed, in the true and full sense, the only Man (Matt. 3 : 17; 17 : 5; Eph. 4 : 13).

SON OF GOD.—This phrase in the Greek is *Huios tou Theou*, which is literally, The Son of the God. This name sets forth Christ in his divine nature, and as identified, in entire unity of being, with God (John 10 : 30). It implies his being born of God (Luke 3 : 38; John 5 : 17, 18, R. V.; 6 : 68, 69; Matt. 6 : 15-17), and incidentally, because thus born, his being the Son of a virgin (Matt. 1 : 20, 23; Luke 1 : 26-35; Gal. 4 : 4). It also implies, by reason of his being one with the Father, his possessing and exercising divine power, including the forgiveness of sin (John 3 : 18; 20 : 31; 1 John 4 : 15), the sanctification of the life (Gal. 2 : 20; 1 John 5 : 5), the punishment of demons (Matt. 8 : 29; Luke 8 : 28), and the resurrection of the dead (John 5 : 25). As Son of God, as well as Son of Man, Christ will come a second time (Matt. 26 : 62-64), and will be revealed in power and great glory (Matt. 24 : 30; 26 : 63, 64). He is, therefore, God's "beloved Son" in whom he is well pleased (Matt. 3 : 17); and hence all the world is bidden to "hear . . . him" (Matt. 17 : 5).

JESUS.—The Greek is *Iesous*. The word is the equivalent of the Old Testament name, Jehoshua, or Joshua, which means the salvation of Jehovah, and thus, Saviour (Matt. 1 : 21). This name refers to Christ's humanity, not now as one with mankind — as in the case of the Son of Man — but as the earthly one, who was not only born of God, but also was

made of a woman (Gal. 4 : 4; Luke 1 : 30-35). As such he was a Jew, being of the line of Abraham and David (Matt. 1 : 1; Luke 3 : 23-34). Hence, the name suggests God's covenant mercies to Israel (Matt. 1 : 31-33). It also suggests Christ's identification with men as the One who suffered with and for them (Matt. 1 : 21; 27 : 37; John 11 : 35). It is, therefore, the name which sets forth Christ's earthly humiliation and shame (Matt. 27 : 37; Phil. 2 : 5-10; Heb. 2 : 9). But also, as a result, it is the name which proclaims Christ's heavenly exaltation and glory (Acts 2 : 32; 7 : 55; Heb. 2 : 9). In God's purpose it is the name at which every creature, whether willingly or unwillingly, will eventually bow the knee and make confession in acknowledgment that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2 : 10, 11).

CHRIST.—The Greek is *Christos*. The word is the same as the Old Testament Messiah, and the New Testament Messias (John 4 : 25), and it signifies The Anointed, it being generally used with the definite article. This name is Christ's official title as related to his priestly office, the one which suggests his having been baptized by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3 : 16; Luke 3 : 21, 22), and so his having been set apart by God to be the One by and through whom he would perform his covenant acts and show his covenant mercies (Luke 24 : 26, 46; Acts 10 : 38; 1 Cor. 1 : 23, 24; 15 : 23; 2 Cor. 5 : 19; Gal.

3 : 17, 29 ; Col. 3 : 4). Hence it is Christ, as Christ, who is the Head of his Church (Eph. 5 : 23). Hence also, Christians are never said to be in Jesus — in 1 Thessalonians 4 : 14 the correct reading is, by means of Jesus — but “in Christ” (Rom. 12 : 5 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 22 ; 2 Cor. 5 : 17 ; Eph. 1 : 3 ; 1 Thess. 4 : 16). It follows, therefore, that it is in Christ that God’s purposes toward Israel and the church will be consummated (Eph. 1 : 9, 10 ; 4 : 15).

LORD.—The Greek is *Kurios*. This word is derived from the word *kuros*, which means supremacy, and thus it sets forth Christ as the One who is supreme, and who owns or possesses, and hence, as the One who has the right to direct and control. A careful reading of the New Testament passages will reveal the fact that this thought of the overlordship of Christ, with its consequent subjection of man to divine authority, is always attached to the use of this name. For this reason it is the name which is closely connected with the church, Christ being, rightfully and wholly, her divine Lord (Acts 10 : 36 ; 1 Cor. 12 : 3 ; 2 Cor. 6 : 17, 18). For this reason also, it is a name which has much to do with experimental religion, the Christian being supposed to do all things in relationship with and for the glory of Christ as Lord (Rom. 12 : 11 ; 14 : 8, 9, 11 ; 1 Cor. 4 : 4, 5 ; 7 : 39 ; 15 : 58 ; Eph. 6 : 1 ; Col. 3 : 18, 23 ; 1 Pet. 3 : 15 ; Rev. 4 : 8, 11 ; 17 : 14 ; 19 : 6, 16).

It only remains to be pointed out that the words Jesus, Christ and Lord are frequently used in combination; that the phrase "Jesus Christ" is most often found in the Gospels; that the phrase "Christ Jesus" is generally found in the Epistles (use the Revised Version for reference); and that the phrase "Lord Jesus Christ" is never found in any other place than the Epistles. In each case the order is divinely established, and hence, our minds are to follow along the line of the order given. When the order is "Jesus Christ," we are to think of Christ, first, as human and earthly, and then, as divine and heavenly. When the order is "Christ Jesus," we are to think of him, first, as divine and heavenly, and then as human and earthly. When the order is, "Lord Jesus Christ," we are to think of him, first, as Lord over all, then as human and earthly, and finally, as divine and heavenly.

These then are the names and titles which we are to present before God our Father in the time and act of prayer. It will be well for us if we keep, on such occasions, their significance in mind, for thus we shall be able to use them intelligently and with divinely appointed effect. But it is highly important, at the same time, that we should remember that the real valuation of all Christ's names and titles will not be with us, but with God. The main thing with us is to offer to God Christ's name or names with simple faith knowing that the Father will in-

finitely understand, and thus, will infinitely hearken and do.

Many years ago, in the city of Toronto, the Mission was brought to a place of great financial scarcity. Our Home was full of candidates in training for China and our expenses were consequently heavy. All of our resources, however, had been exhausted and we were left without provision even for the necessities of life. Under these circumstances, one morning, I turned into my office utterly depressed and hopeless, especially as the morning mail which I had looked over had brought us nothing. It was thus that I fell upon my knees to pray. But this was more to pour out the burden of my soul upon God than to ask him confidently for relief. As I was kneeling I began to wish that Mr. Hudson Taylor were with me, for I had often been with him in similar crises and knew that he had power to draw from God needed help. At this I asked myself how it was that my friend gained the ear of God so readily and effectively. Thereupon I recalled the fact that he always offered his petitions to the Father in the name of Christ. This was illuminating and encouraging. So I rose from my knees, sat down at my desk, figured up carefully what amount of money was needed, knelt again, spread my paper with its figures before God and asked him, in the alone name and for the alone sake of Christ, to send us speedily the amount of money required,

which was six hundred dollars. This act took all anxiety from my heart, even though the noon and afternoon mails brought no answer to my prayer. The next morning's mail produced one letter, written by a friend in Cleveland, asking me to accept for the Mission the gift which it enclosed and telling me to use it for any purpose whatever. I looked at the check and found that it was for just six hundred dollars. Afterwards I traced the matter and discovered that our friend's letter had been written a few moments after I had spread my paper of figures before God and had asked him to supply the need which it represented.

I do not imagine that it will always be God's choice to answer prayer in such a dramatic fashion as the above. This episode was in the early days of my prayer experience, when I was, as it were, in the kindergarten class of the prayer life, and God knew that I needed just then a measure of sight in order to encourage faith. Nevertheless, this fact remains true that the China Inland Mission in North America, as elsewhere, has never known any other way from that day to this than that of asking the Father, in the name of Christ, for its temporal and spiritual supplies, and also that prayer in that name has always and abundantly been answered. Manifestly then, whatever prayer we reasonably and submissively offer in Christ's name, God our Father will certainly and fully answer.

V

PRAYER IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

V

PRAYER IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Praying in the Holy Ghost"

The common understanding among Christians is that prayer in the Holy Spirit is advantageous, but not necessary. It is thought that even the unsaved man, who is not born of the Spirit, may pray, and hence that the Christian, who is born of the Spirit, may certainly pray, but without the special aid of the Spirit. The teaching of God's Word, however, is quite different from these conceptions.

The unsaved man may call upon the name of the Lord and so be saved (Rom. 10 : 13). But as far as true prayer is concerned, he cannot pray. The Christian can pray. But to do this effectively he needs not only to be born of the Spirit, but also to be empowered by the Spirit. The word of our Lord to the woman of Samaria proves these assertions beyond doubting: "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4 : 24). Here, be it noted, Christ implies that it is an unalterable law that those who worship God should offer that worship, however expressed, in the person and power of the Holy Ghost.

In view of this primal obligation of being Spirit-empowered, those inspired writers who spoke of prayer exhorted all who read their words to pray in the Holy Spirit. Jude wrote in this wise: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20); and Paul wrote in this wise: "Having access by [in] one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2 : 18); and again, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication" (Eph. 6 : 18). Remembering that the word "watching" in the latter verse means literally being sleepless or keeping awake, it is seen that the apostle's conception of prayer was this, exercising such a constant alertness in the Holy Spirit as may only be likened to the physical experience of denying one's self the need and comfort of physical rest. In other words, God insists upon it that we shall give ourselves incessantly to prayer, and that we shall pray at all times and in all circumstances in the consciousness that God the Holy Ghost is our alone acceptability and power.

The apostle Paul went so far in this matter of praying in the Holy Spirit as to declare that not even praise may be offered to God except through the Spirit. One would naturally think that a grateful heart could express its thanksgiving apart from the Holy Ghost. But Paul did not have this view of things. Speaking of the praise of song he wrote

as follows: "What is it then? I will sing with the spirit" (1 Cor. 14 : 15); and again, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and *spiritual* songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5 : 19); and again, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and *spiritual* songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3 : 16). It will be seen from these various passages that the apostle's mind, in the matter of praise, was set upon rendering adoration in an intensely spiritual manner, which implies that such adoration was to be offered through the personality and the energizing of the Holy Spirit. And if this is true of praise, it is certainly true of prayer.

It is to be noted from the above that only the trinitarian may worship God in prayer. It is to be remembered, according to a definition given in an early chapter, that prayer is worship offered to God the Father, in the name of Christ, and in the person and power of the Holy Ghost. In other words, the worshiper must identify himself in the act of worship, with all of the three persons of the Trinity. This implies that the one who does not do this simply does not worship at all. The apostle Paul sets forth this truth in language which is beyond misunderstanding: "Through him we both have access by [in] one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph.

2 : 18). This evidently means that prayer must be offered, not only to the Father and in the name of Christ, but also, in and through the Holy Ghost. Believing in the three persons of the Trinity and presenting our prayer in identification with each and all of these persons, we may have "access" to God; and in these conditions we shall graciously and fully be accepted by him. Praying then, in the Holy Spirit is a necessity. And praying in the power of the Spirit is a privilege and opportunity, securing to us the largest possible results.

If the foregoing statements are true, as they seem to be, two enquiries are to be considered: first, How may we pray in the Spirit? and second, What will be the issue in life and service if we do so pray? We would now address ourselves to the answering of these questions.

In answer to the question, How may we pray in the Spirit? we would say that we are to pray in the Spirit by being born of the Spirit. Regeneration is a prerequisite, if prayer-sanctification is to be experienced. The only way to end in the Spirit is to begin in the same; and beginning in the Spirit will lead, if right courses be taken, to ending in the same. The Christian, therefore, may have this confidence, as he prays, that there is already within him the power which makes for perfection in the prayer life, he being the temple of the Holy Ghost and the Spirit being the instigator and developer of prayer. It

thus becomes plain that the main requirement of praying in the Spirit is to be indwelt by the Spirit and to be controlled by him. These facts being established we shall fulfil the divine condition, namely, that we should worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4 : 24).

With the above thoughts before us, the teaching of Paul concerning prayer in the Spirit becomes manifestly plain: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8 : 26, 27). Here, it is clear, the Spirit in the practice of prayer is pre-eminent, interceding for the saint as he prays, teaching him what he ought to say, presenting his prayer before God, and finally, bringing to pass the will of God as related to the prayer offered. In every act of prayer, therefore, we are to yield ourselves, by faith, to God the Holy Ghost.

In answer to the second question, What will be the issue in life and service if we pray in the Spirit? we would seek to describe the results which may be obtained as follows:

Praying in the Spirit secures for us access to God:
"Through him we both have access by [in]

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 one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). The word "access" as here used is one of encouraging meaning. It signifies, literally, a leading unto, such as a person enjoys who is led by a prince into the presence of a king. In other words, prayer offered in the Spirit brings to pass the blessed experience of being conducted by the Spirit into the presence of God, with the privilege of standing in that presence and making known there all of the desires of the heart. In that high place and before that holy personality, Christ gives us perfect standing, and the Spirit gives us perfect accessibility, so that accepted in the one person and welcomed in the other, we may make our requests before the throne of grace with all boldness (Heb. 4:16).

worship
 Praying in the Spirit secures to us the true worship of God: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" John 4:23, 24). The word "worship" as here used means to prostrate oneself, or to adore, and thus it is a broad term, implying all that life and lip may offer to God which will show forth his infinite and eternal worth. Thus it includes the act and offering of prayer, for God's worth is nowhere more clearly set forth as when, in our utter need and dependence, we make our petitions before

him. Worship, therefore, is both the requisite and determiner of acceptable prayer. For God demands that we shall worship him; and where we do this in prayer, he quickly responds and opens his heart and hand to us. Hence, we have here a divinely logical sequence. The Spirit leads to worship. Worship leads to prayer. The prayer of worship in the Spirit, therefore, obtains God's favoring and answering.

Praying in the Spirit secures to us the benefits *of* sonship before God: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4 : 6); "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8 : 14, 15). In these two passages we see first, that the Holy Spirit cries, "Abba, Father," and then that the Christian cries the same. We also see, in the one case and the other, that the cause of the utterance is found in this, that the Spirit of God's Son has brought the saint into a position of sonship, and that it is as a son that he takes the cry of Abba upon his lips and addresses God as his Father. Now the word son, as it occurs in the original of these passages, implies something more than childhood. It is the word that indicates that the child has fulfilled all legal claims to sonship, that he has passed from the immaturity of childhood into

the maturity of sonship, and hence has acquired both the standing and experience of an accredited son of God. This is Paul's teaching in the epistle to the Galatians (Gal. 4 : 1-7) ; and it is also his teaching in the epistle to the Romans (Rom. 8 : 14). Praying therefore in the Holy Spirit implies that we, as sons, are in a highly developed condition before God, wherein, in the process of prayer, we may know his mind and make our petitions according to his will. This is the case because sonship implies fellowship, and fellowship includes a knowledge of the divine thought and purpose. Such praying as this leads us into large spiritual experiences, and thus into the most ample prayer privileges and enjoyments.

Praying in the Spirit secures for us God as our environment and sphere: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6 : 18) ; "Praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20). There are two great truths presented by the Word of God in reference to the Spirit's relationship to the saint: first, the Spirit is in the saint (1 Cor. 3 : 16) ; and second, the saint is in the Spirit (Eph. 6 : 18 ; Jude 20 ; Rev. 1 : 10). Now there is a difference between these two statements, for while they are similar they are not identical. And the difference is this: one is largely judicial and the other is largely experimental. The Spirit, being in the saint, confirms for him the work of Christ upon Calvary's

cross and thus gives him perfect standing and acceptability before God. And the saint, being in the Spirit, is brought into the experience and enjoyment of all the various benefits which Christ has provided for him. In other words, the one makes possible the other, for the man who has his standing before God secured by the Spirit has the privilege of living, moving, and having his being, consciously and potentially, in the same Spirit. To illustrate, the experience is like that which a person enjoys in the physical world as related to the atmosphere. The atmosphere is in the man and the man is in the atmosphere. In such a condition, the person's life, through the atmosphere, is both obtained and maintained. Thus the Spirit is in the saint and he has life, with all that this implies; and thus the saint is in the Spirit and he has fulness of life, with all that this implies. Thus it is, in reference to prayer, that the Spirit living in us and we living in him, we have life and life abundant, and hence, we enter into the knowledge and experience of what God is, wills and does. If, therefore, we pray in the Spirit, God the Holy Ghost surrounds and pervades us, and he thus transforms both us and our prayers.

Praying in the Spirit secures to us subjection to God: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he

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that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8 : 26, 27). It is manifest from these words, as it is also from our experience, that the infirmities of the flesh prevail even in our best moments of prayer. To say the least of the matter, our minds are not infinite in wisdom and knowledge, and hence they need to be instructed by God. It is this lack on our part, even when our hearts are right toward God, which leads to faulty thought and expression in the practice of prayer ; and it is this falling short of the glory of God in praying which makes it necessary for the Spirit to offer our petitions "with groanings which cannot be uttered."

But the passage does not leave the matter here. Paul, who was inspired in his utterances and who knew much of the mind of God as a result of his spiritual experiences, went on to declare that God searches the hearts and that the Spirit makes intercession for the praying saint according to the will of God. Thus the apostle indicates that the saint who prays in the Spirit may have behind the faultiness of his expressed prayer, a heart which supremely desires the will of God ; and he further indicates that the Holy Ghost, who has produced this heart subjectivity, will take the poorly expressed prayer and transform it into that which will be acceptable before the perfect God. We perceive thus that it is

the work of the Holy Spirit both to subdue the heart and perfect the petition. This is what he did in the case of Jesus, in the days of his flesh, when he prayed that the cup might be taken from him, for he empowered him to add, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22 : 42) ; and this is what he did in the case of Paul, when the apostle had prayed three times that the thorn might be taken from his flesh and had discovered that it was not God's will to do this, for he immediately enabled him to cease his asking and gladly accept the infirmity which made supremely for the glory of God (2 Cor. 12 : 7-10).

Praying in the Spirit secures to us amplification of our intercessions as they are offered unto God. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power [the Holy Spirit] that worketh in us ; unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3 : 20, 21). When the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray according to the will of God, he does much more than subject us to that will. For the Spirit does not fetter us, nor are his purposes toward us small and mean. It is true that he forbids us to ask anything contrary to the divine will. But, above and beyond this, he seeks to enlarge our conceptions and desires until he has made our petitions worthy of him with whom we have to do. God is a great God

and is always planning to do great things; and it is the Spirit's longing that we should rise to the majesty of his being and ask things which are commensurate with his measureless ways and works. It is his will for us, therefore, that we shall grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3 : 18), and thus that we shall ever be expanding in the apprehension of the divine mind and purpose (Col. 1 : 9, 10).

It is ever our privilege for these reasons to cast ourselves upon the upward and outward movings of the Holy Ghost, in order that we may be borne away to infinitely high and holy realms of intercession. And be it noted that such praying will take from our prayers the selfish and petty things which are unworthy of presentation before sinless and infinite Deity, and will bring us into that position where praying concerning the great purposes of God will be nearer and dearer to us than all else besides. It is not wrong to pray for ourselves and our needs. But even the best of such petitions are not for a moment comparable with those which make for the proclamation and exaltation of the holy name. It is significant that the Lord's Prayer, which gives us the right of asking for our daily bread, begins with the petition, "Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven;" and also, that it ends with the asseveration, "For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen" (Matt. 6 : 6, 10, 13). God the Holy Ghost has power to bring our prayers into just such self-free and divinely illimitable enlargements as this.

Many years ago I read a story concerning prayer, which illustrates these thoughts :

A gentleman in England, one summer day, was walking along a country road, between green hedge-rows which lined the road on either side. He had passed a Union, or poorhouse, and was not far beyond it. Suddenly he heard a voice which seemed to come from behind the hedge. Stepping to it and looking over it, he discovered there a small boy upon his knees, with his hands uplifted in the attitude of prayer ; and, as he watched him, he heard him say, "A, B, C ; A, B, C ; A, B, C."

The gentleman, greatly surprised, exclaimed, "My boy, whatever are you doing?"

At this the boy opened his eyes and said, "I am praying, sir."

"Praying," replied the man, "surely you do not call that praying?"

The little fellow was perplexed, but he answered :

"Well, sir, it's like this. The preacher in the Union said any one could pray to God. I wanted to pray, but I didn't know what to say. So I thought I'd just repeat the first three letters of the alphabet and let God make a prayer out of them."

It is not to be concluded that such a prayer as this

is one which should be duplicated. And yet, there is a suggestion here, as to praying in the Holy Spirit, which has its application to us and is not lightly to be passed by. For the spirit of this praying lad should be ours. He was willing that God should form his prayers for him, and he was prepared to say to these a quick Amen. And praying in the Spirit should mean to all of us just this. For spiritual praying is not only our speaking to God, but also his speaking to us; and it implies that we shall gladly consent to whatever the Spirit teaches us to pray for. A listening ear then, is a first condition of praying in the Spirit; and praying thus will lead us to a heart and life acquiescence in the thing which God chooses, whether it be of one kind or another. The Spirit is God's; and when we are the Spirit's, we also are God's. It follows, therefore, that we should abandon ourselves, as we pray, utterly and constantly to the Spirit in order that we may be God's. For thus, and thus only, may we hope, in praying, to be lifted up and out of ourselves and brought into the absolutely perfect, the infinitely great and the eternally blessed will of God.

As a further illustration of what praying in the Holy Spirit may mean, let me tell the following tale:

Miss Henrietta Soltau was for many years the head of the Young Ladies' Training Home of the China Inland Mission, in London, England. One

night, some years ago, she prepared herself for bed, knelt at her bedside, said a good night to the Lord, and then got into bed and gave herself to sleep. Usually, she easily fell asleep. But this night a spirit of wakefulness was upon her. Finally, after much tossing to and fro, she asked herself if there was any sin which God would have her confess. But she could think of nothing of a special kind. Then she questioned as to whether or not God would have her offer prayer about anything or for any person. At this, she arose, knelt and began to pray. Presently, there came into her mind a party of lady missionaries which had left London for Shanghai some weeks before and was then on the Indian Ocean. At once she had the conviction that these friends were in danger and so it was that she began to plead with God that he would give them his protecting care. After a time of such intercession, her heart was eased, she again retired and immediately fell fast asleep.

A number of weeks after this experience, Miss Soltau received a letter from one of the young ladies of the party for which she had prayed. This letter told of a quiet outward journey until the Indian Ocean was reached. There, the letter said, a fearful storm arose which threatened the steamer with destruction. The captain ordered all of the passengers below decks; the ports and companionway doors were closed and fastened; and those thus shut in gave

themselves to listening to the howling winds and pounding waves, not knowing what a moment would bring forth.

In the midst of this terrifying experience, the young lady who wrote the letter went to her cabin and began to pray. But she found herself so frightened that she could not pray. It was thus that her thought turned back to Miss Soltau in London as to a woman of prayer, and also, that she finally cried to the Lord, "O God, lead Miss Soltau to pray for us!" It was not long after this that the storm abated; and in due time the ship dropped anchor at the port of Shanghai.

Miss Soltau, when she received the letter from her friend, matched the time of the storm with that of her bedside prayer, and she found that it was at the very time when this friend was crying out to God for her to pray that she was held waking by the Holy Spirit until she had prayed.

VI

PRAYER PRINCIPLES

VI

PRAYER PRINCIPLES

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss"

It is a commonly accepted fact that prayer, if it is to be answered, must be offered according to the will of God. This conclusion is reached, first, because it is true in the nature of the case; and second, because the Word clearly so teaches. As to the first, how can God answer prayer if his will is opposed to the petition which is offered? And as to the second, the beloved apostle declares, "This is the confidence we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5 : 14, 15). We are on firm ground, therefore, when we declare that a first requisite of prevailing prayer is to find God's will and then to conform our petitions to it.

All this is plain. But the problem with which we are faced, as a consequence of our conclusion, is anything but plain. We must pray according to God's will. But how are we to know God's will? In seeking to answer this question, we may probably

make our best advancement by raising the further question, How has God revealed himself, and thus his will, to the children of men? Let us make answer to this as follows:

God has revealed himself, as the Scripture says, "at sundry times and in divers manners" (Heb. 1 : 1), and "by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1 : 3). And included in this revelation have been the following processes: first, creation; second, conscience; third, providence; and fourth, inspiration. If, therefore, we are to understand the divine revelation, we must consider these four methods. This now, we shall do. But as we meditate upon these, let it be understood that we shall have only the salient feature of each in mind, and this as related to prayer.

CREATION.—The pre-eminent feature of creation is law. God is the author of all things, visible and invisible (Col. 1 : 16), and it is manifest that he has ever moved, both in creation and re-creation, in accordance with the laws which he has established. It is to be kept in mind that the Creator in his creative procedures has not been under law, but above it, his laws being the expression of his sovereign will and voluntary acts. Nevertheless, when one contemplates the divine movements, either in the physical or spiritual world, one is at once impressed by their law-character; and the longer the contemplation continues the stronger the impression becomes. In fact, we are forced to conclude that God's laws

have prevailed and do prevail everywhere and in everything.

This law-feature in God's world has an important bearing upon the subject of prayer, and this in two directions: first, it is clear that prayer cannot set aside law; and second, it is equally clear that prayer must work in harmony with it. The deduction from this is that there are certain things which we may not ask of God because they are contrary to law; and also, that there are certain other things which we may ask of him because they are in harmony with it. And the further deduction is that we must learn, in praying, to discern between these two classes of things, and be guided accordingly. Let me illustrate this as follows:

Suppose a devoted Christian gives himself to prayer so earnestly that he neglects food through fasting, sleep through night-watching, and exercise through confinement and unrelaxed service; will God preserve that man from a physical breakdown? Experience answers, No! And suppose, having broken down, the man gives himself to prayer for healing; will God answer prayer and restore that man apart from the adjusting of his life to God's physical laws? The long list of life-wrecks and the fact of a silent heaven answer, No!

And suppose a devoted Christian engrosses himself in service for God and men to such an extent that he neglects personal prayer and the study of the

Scriptures, but all the time looks to God that he may grow in grace and have power for service; will that man mature spiritually and be used of God largely and increasingly? Once more experience answers, No! And suppose, finding himself spiritually static and powerless, he longs and prays earnestly for enlargement, but neglects fellowship with God; will God answer prayer and increase that man in grace and knowledge and power? God's silence in heaven and the great company in pulpit and pew of otherwise good but in this respect broken and valueless lives answer, No!

In other words, God does not first make a law, and then break it, even for the sake of the man of prayer. On the contrary, he maintains the laws which he has made, insisting that men shall first pray and then live in correspondence with the divine ordering, whether in the physical or spiritual realm. Thus, the man who prays most wisely and effectively will be the one who first discerns and then remembers and obeys all God-ordained laws. It is true that men may keep it in mind that God has many laws, and that it is his will, at times, to overcome the power of some lesser law by that of a greater one. But this does not invalidate the fact that the man who prays must be a law-keeper. For instance, Christ would not throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple; for there was no reason for it and the law of gravitation was against it, and hence, he

would not tempt the Lord his God (Matt. 4 : 5-7). Nevertheless, Christ did venture, in spite of the law of gravitation, to walk on the water ; for there was a worthy spiritual objective before him, and he could ask, for this reason, that the greater law of God's upholding would preserve him from the lesser one of sinking and death (Matt. 14 : 24-32). But it is to be observed that in neither of these cases was Christ a law-destroyer ; in both he was a law maintainer. And it is required that we should be like him.

CONSCIENCE.—The prominent thing about conscience is its admonition. The voice of conscience within the breast is ever present, always distinct and often very loud. It is man's solemn mandatory, with its Do-nots and Dos ; and it is his austere judge, who, discriminating between the two, points out the penalty of broken law and the rewarding of kept law. It is thus, man's sixth sense, which makes him more than the beast of the field which perishes, giving him what no animal ever has, namely, God-consciousness, and the sense of God-obligation (Rom. 2 : 14-16).

But it is necessary to remark that conscience is not, in itself, sufficient for man's spiritual necessities. This faculty seems to have come from the Garden of Eden as one of God's preserved and good gifts ; but, manifestly, it came forth marred. It is like a lamp which, while burning, has a slow supply of oil ; like a lantern whose side is torn and whose flame

is blown to and fro by passing gusts of wind. In other words, its light needs brightening and steadying. If it were not so, there would be no need of the Holy Spirit and the holy Word of God. But there is this need, as experience teaches us. Conscience does much for us. It tells us that God is; that he is a God of law; that his law is to be obeyed; that obedience means rewarding; that disobedience means punishment and that such punishment ends in death (Rom. 1 : 32; 2 : 8-16).

The above, however, does not indicate that we are to neglect, in the act of prayer, the dictates of our conscience. If this faculty had not a divine voice for the soul, God would not have bidden it to speak to us. But this he has done; and where thus he has expressed his will concerning us, it behooves us to hearken and obey. Therefore, as it was with the law of creation, so now it is with that of conscience; we are not to pray against it, but with it. Being still, in order that we may hear its voice speaking to us, we are to be its echo when we make our prayer-petitions, abstaining from asking the thing it does not endorse and making bold to request the thing it does.

PROVIDENCE.—The notable thing about providence is its beneficent purpose. God has never yielded up the prerogative of his overlordship, and this has ever been the expression of his wisdom and love. It is true that kings have sat upon thrones ruling the

peoples of the earth (Prov. 8 : 15, 16), and that Satan has been, by divine permission, the "god of this world" (Matt. 4 : 8, 9; 2 Cor. 4 : 4). But above and over these, God Almighty has reigned, doing according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth (Psa. 115 : 3; Dan. 4 : 35), and controlling even Satan himself (Matt. 4 : 1-11; Rev. 12 : 7-12).

It follows from this that God, in ruling supremely, has ruled according to a plan. Having all things under his control and seeing the end from the beginning (Acts 15 : 18), he, in spite of man's rebellion against him and even by its means, has guided earth's affairs to those ultimate issues of life and death which are ever in his sacred keeping (Acts 17 : 24-26). His process in bringing good to pass has been the moving of the Holy Spirit and the using of the righteous among the wicked (Rev. 5 : 6; Matt. 5 : 13, 14); and his spiritual and beneficial objective has been the exaltation of his Son as Saviour and Lord and the salvation and sanctification of his people (John 3 : 16; 17 : 15-17; Phil. 2 : 9-11; Rev. 19 : 11-16). Amidst apparent confusion, therefore, there have been divine design and order; and the end of all will be the eternal and infinite glory of God (1 Cor. 15 : 27, 28; Rev. 6 : 8-14).

In addition, it is to be observed that the great purpose which God has had in his providence has been the instruction and development of his redeemed

children. As he ordained that the past should not be made perfect apart from the present (Heb. 11 : 40), so also he has decreed that the present shall not be made perfect apart from the past (1 Cor. 10 : 6-11). The divine Spirit taught the saints of old to look forward to the future with wide-open and clear seeing eyes (1 Pet. 1 : 11); and the same Spirit teaches us in our time to look backward upon the past, in thoughtful meditation and with a longing to know and understand its meanings (Deut. 8 : 1-20; Rev. 2 : 5; 3 : 3). And if this Spirit be not in us as he was in the old-time saints, God's lessons, written in secular and sacred history, will prove to be in vain. Moreover, what is true of the larger aspect of things is also true of the smaller; that is, what is true collectively is true individually. God has intended that we should learn from his dealings with the nations, Israel and the church; and he would also have us learn from his dealings with ourselves. As to ourselves, we are to remember all the way in which we have come; where we have gone right and where wrong; what have been our successes and what our failures; and, along with these, each Christian is to keep in memory God's dealings with him, his grantings and withholdings, his deliverances unto good and commitments unto chastisement. It follows, therefore, that we, with all humility where we have succeeded, with all penitence where we have failed, with great studiousness concerning God's

ways with us and concerning our ways with him, are to make our spiritual deductions; and then we are not to forget the lessons which we have learned.

All this has a vital relationship to the matter of prayer. If we are to pray intelligently, and, therefore, effectively, we must not be as those who are blind and cannot see afar off (2 Pet. 1 : 9), forgetting the past as if it had never been, and thinking of the present like a child new-born. God expects us to be men, capable of viewing, thinking, analyzing, and synthesizing, and, finally, of praying with such understanding as is based upon experience, as is derived from lessons learned and then applied. Doing this, we shall find what has been the purpose of God's providential dealings with us; and we shall discover what will deliver us from foolish praying and will make us skilled in offering our petitions according to the will of God. Not to do this may secure us, at times, an answer to our insistent supplications, but along with it—as Israel found and many a Christian has found—such an aftermath of bitter experience as will turn our ill-gotten spoils of prayer into ashes at our feet (Num. 11 : 16-23; 21-33; Psal. 106 : 4-15). Let me illustrate this last fact by a Mission story. It is one of a simple kind; but also, it is one with a wide application.

Many years ago, in connection with our Mission service at Toronto, we accepted three young ladies for service in China. As we had chosen them with-

out reference to the fact that they were not financially provided for in respect to their outfits and passages, we were obliged to wait upon God for funds for these objects. I had some hesitation just then in doing this for we had reached the late winter and I realized, if God should answer prayer and we should send forward the ladies, that we should be placing them in China in the spring of the year, which, I feared, might work the new-arrivals physical harm. I could not forget the fact, on the other hand, that the heathen in China did not stop dying in the heated term of summer, that the spiritual need was a present and pressing one, and that the life of faith called for ventures of a radical and daring kind. Nevertheless, the question remained, Was not our guidance to be obtained, not through supplies divinely given, but through preceding Mission experiences of a like kind which pointed in the direction of keeping back the young missionaries until the cool of the following fall?

At this juncture, a co-worker suggested that we should leave the question with God to solve; that is, that we should ask him for the needed funds, and then act according to his giving or withholding. At first sight, this seemed wise and satisfying. But the longer I regarded the proposal, the more inclined I was to think it a doubtful expedient, for it seemed like a dodging of the issue, and thus a putting of a responsibility upon God, which, in the light of his

providential teachings, he expected us to bear. However, who was I that I should undervalue God and overvalue myself in this manner? Was it not better to keep my hands off and trust utterly the heavenly Father? And so we prayed for the large sum of money which we required.

God answered prayer in a remarkable manner. Presently, a letter was received from a young lady in an Iowa college, saying that three colleges in that state had raised funds for sending out three missionaries to China, that they preferred young ladies and that they would be glad to know if we could give them three accepted candidates for this purpose. Now, the three young ladies whom we had selected were from Iowa; and, under such circumstances, it looked as if God had provided for our friends with that nicety as is shown when a glove is fitted upon a hand. Indeed, the whole affair appeared to border on the miraculous, especially as the three colleges had raised their funds without knowing anything about our three accepted candidates. Under such circumstances my fears were put to rest. A little later we sent forth the three missionaries with joy and rejoicing.

What was the result? Our friends had a good voyage, for it was the pleasant time of the year. They were delighted with China, for the buds on the trees were springing and the birds in the branches were singing. They settled down to their study at

the Yangchow Training Home with avidity, for they had the long summer before them and could count upon getting to their interior stations for active work in the early fall. But this is not the end of the tale. The instructors in the Home did not take the view of things which the young ladies did, for they had been working hard all the past winter, they needed a summer rest, and they were now obliged to keep the Home open and teaching going for these three unexpected visitors. In addition, the spring gave place to summer and temperate weather to hot, and the three missionaries began to wilt up as the leaves of flowers do in the mid-day sun. Somewhat later, all of the missionaries had to desist from their efforts, two being sick and one being completely broken down with head-pains. Happily, they lived. Yet all were seriously affected; and the one most sick did not recover from her experience, and finally, had to return home. Thus, the summer rest was lost both to the teachers and students, considerable physical harm was done to the young ladies, and the Mission had spent in vain a considerable sum of money. We never again sent to China a party of missionaries in the spring of the year. Nor did we ever again ask God for money with such a purpose in view. Divine wisdom, through a bitter experience, had been granted to us; and thereafter we prayed and acted according to the teaching of God's good providences.

INSPIRATION.—The predominate feature in inspiration is its perfection. All the works of God are perfect, the nearer and the farther, the lesser and the greater, the inconsequential and the consequential. Wherever God has gone, whatever he has done, it may always be said of him, "As for God, his way is perfect" (2 Sam. 22 : 31 ; Psa. 18 : 30).

But there are degrees of perfection. The bud is a perfect bud and the flower is a perfect flower ; but there is a difference between the two, namely, that which naturally exists between a bud and a flower. Again, a twinkling star is perfect and a flaming sun is perfect ; but there is a difference between the two, namely, that which necessarily exists between a star and a sun. And yet again, a new-born babe is perfect and a full grown man is perfect ; but there is a difference between the two, namely, that which so manifestly and wonderfully exists between a babe and a man. And thus it is as between all the lesser works of God, such as creation, conscience and providence, and his greatest work, which is that produced by inspiration, namely, the Holy Scriptures. In this last case, we have perfection perfected, both in the thought and in the word which conveys the thought. Scientifically — as far as the Word teaches science — historically, theologically, prophetically and spiritually, all the Scripture is supreme in its perfection. Indeed, so fully is this the case that the Book actually bears,

by its Author's own designation, the same high and holy name which He has given to the infinitely perfect Son of God, namely, the "Word of God" (John 1 : 1 ; Rev. 19 : 13 ; 1 Thess. 2 : 13 ; Rev. 20 : 4) .

And it is to be noted that the perfection of the saints through the perfect Word is to be realized in prayer as in all else. This result is to be brought to pass in the following ways: first, through the Word's illumination of the soul ; second, through the Word's maturing of the spirit ; third, through the Word's empowering of the life ; and lastly, through the Word's efficient promises of God. Any one of these subjects might well demand our attention. But we shall speak only of the prayer-promises.

The prayer-promises being perfect, they perfect the life of him who believes and uses them in prayer. This is true for two reasons: first, because of their inherent quality ; and second, because of the contact which they secure with the One who stands behind them as their grantor and guarantor. As to the first, it is necessarily a distinct spiritual gain to have the mind dwell and the heart rest upon such high and holy words as the prayer-promises contain ; and as to the second, it must, in the nature of the case, always prove to be a transforming power in the life intimately to touch the person who speaks such heavenly words, and then brings them to pass. In such experiences, one is brought into an altogether new realm of living, which can only be likened to

one's leaving a low-lying and unhealthful plain and ascending to the top of a mountain whose heights stand above the clouds and are in the pure and invigorating air of heaven. In these conditions, one does more than obtain beautiful and expansive visions; one is himself beautified and expanded, becoming like the thing which he beholds. This is the subjective influence of an objective prayer experience. And to what perfection it leads!

More than this, one cannot deal with the prayer-promises without having the soul enriched through the discovery that they are intensive in meaning and extensive in application. As to the intensive, they are such because they mean all that they say and this according to the highest conception which one may have of them. As to the extensive, they are such because they mean more than they say and this beyond the highest imagination which one may exercise concerning them. And in these respects they are absolutely unique. A given bank will issue a certificate which promises to pay, say, one hundred dollars in gold on demand. But some day the holder of the certificate may find that the most the bank can pay, because of adversity, is fifty cents on the dollar, that is, fifty dollars; and the holder of the certificate will certainly find that the bank will never pay, however great its prosperity, more than one hundred cents on the dollar, that is, one hundred dollars. But it is not so with the bank of heaven. It has issued

many promissory certificates, and their holders may be assured, not only that it will never discount one of them, but also that it will cash all of them at a price far beyond what they seem to promise. This last is what Paul meant when he said, "exceeding abundantly *above* all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3 : 20). And this is perfection indeed!

But there is a truth about God's prayer-promises which it is important to keep constantly in mind, lest we deal lightly and unlawfully with them. Nearly all of these promises have conditions fixed in the midst of them which are interpretive of their meaning, and which must be fully complied with if their benefits are to be obtained. For instance: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5 : 16), where the condition is that the prayer must be offered by a "righteous" man, that is, a Christian. Again: "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14 : 14), where the condition is that the one who prays must ask only what he may rightfully connect with the name of Christ. And again: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15 : 7), where the condition is that this twofold abiding must be maintained if one's prayer is to be heard and answered. This conditional element in the universal promises of God is commonly passed over. But it is a highly important prayer factor, both as to observation and

practice; for otherwise, anticipation will be unauthorized, and will lead to disappointment and final misunderstanding of God. If, however, the conditions made are observed and complied with, then the universality of the promises will always and abundantly be realized. In other words, the perfection of the prayer-promises will be secured in the measure that their conditions are perfectly understood and perfectly fulfilled.

All of this reasoning leads us back to the thought of inspiration. If perfection in the prayer-promises and in their use is required of God, then it is plain that the divine Spirit must have taken such a method in giving and applying these promises as would secure this result. This both implies and demands an inspired Word; for how otherwise could perfection be obtained? Perfection in thought and word has never dwelt in man; it resides alone in God. But, being in God, it could be expressed through man, first, in the writing of the Word, and then in the use which he is permitted to make of it. This was Paul's conception of the matter, who wrote, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [is God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be *perfect*, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3 : 16, 17). And be it noted that this statement applies as fully to the exercise of prayer as to any other spiritual

experience. We have then, God's fullest revelation of himself, as related to prayer, in inspiration as expressed in the Holy Scriptures. Here, finally, supremely and infinitely, God manifests himself as the prayer-hearing and prayer-answering One, asking us to make our petitions in accordance with the perfect Word, and giving us the privilege of offering these in perfect confidence in it.

It was in the year 1889 that Mrs. Frost and I went from Attica, New York, to the city of Toronto, Ontario, to establish there a center for the work of the China Inland Mission. By 1899, God having greatly blessed us, our service had been firmly established. At that time my thoughts turned outward, for I began to feel that we needed a center in the United States as well as the one in Canada. Thereupon, I began to ask God to open the way before me that I might be able to establish the Mission in some eastern city, such as Philadelphia or New York. I continued, from time to time, offering this prayer until the year 1900. At this time Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor took up deputation work in behalf of the Mission throughout the eastern and southern states. As we found it difficult to follow helpfully the work of our friends from a far distant and foreign country, we saw with increasing clearness that an American Mission center was a necessity. This finally led me to conclude that I ought to leave the Toronto work in other hands and that

Mrs. Frost and I should transfer our personal service to the east. But moving to New York or Philadelphia implied renting or buying a fairly large residence, in order to take in our family, candidates, and missionaries on furlough, and the Mission had no funds for the one purpose or the other. Under these circumstances I recognized that the most I could do was to pay a visit to the cities mentioned, and to see if God would, in some strange way, supply our need of a home. This I did in the spring of 1901. As I undertook this quest I offered prayer to God for a Mission home in the east, and I stayed my heart upon the word of the Lord, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6 : 33).

At New York nothing occurred which might serve as God's token of guidance, property being held at a high price and no friend offering to aid us in securing what was necessary. But in Philadelphia I met with a different experience. A Christian gentleman who lived in Norristown invited me to take luncheon with him, and, after the repast was finished, asked me if I had any idea of coming to the east. I replied that I had and was in the city to look over the field with the Mission interests in view. He then said, "I don't want unduly to influence you, but if it would be of any help to you, you may understand that I am prepared to give the Mission a home in Norristown." I told my kind friend that his offer

greatly influenced me; that it was the divine token for which I had been seeking; and, if he was fully persuaded of God's guidance, I was prepared then and there to accept of his generosity. This led to my friend purchasing a house at Norristown, costing \$12,500, and, in the fall of 1901, to our settling in it.

After living in this new home for nearly two years, I became convinced, while the house had been God's good provision for us for the time being, that it was located too far out from Philadelphia to serve suitably as a permanent residence. It was my sad duty, therefore, to tell my friend this. Naturally and rightfully he was greatly disappointed. But later, he came to feel that my judgment in the matter was correct. He thereupon offered to purchase the home from the Mission. On hearing this last, I asked him if there was a poor house near, and told him, in case he did much more business after that manner that he would certainly end there; whereupon I refused to let him pay for the property which his money had originally purchased. But my good friend was obdurate; and finally he actually bought back his own property by giving us \$12,500 for it. In doing so, however, he requested that the money should be forwarded to China for use there. I confess that this designation was somewhat of a disappointment to me; for, if I was to take the money — which I finally decided to do — I hoped that I might be

given freedom to use it for the purchase of another home, nearer Philadelphia. However, I accepted the money as proffered, and forwarded it to China for the Mission service there. This left us without the Norristown home, and with no provision whatever for a home elsewhere. But once more I fell back on prayer, and also upon the Master's word, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

A lady who then lived at Germantown, but has since gone to be with the Lord, heard of my action in respect to the Norristown home and sent for me. She asked me, when I called, if I thought Germantown would do for a Mission center. For a number of reasons, my mind had fixed itself upon that part of Philadelphia, so I was able immediately to say that I felt it was a suitable place. At this she offered to rent us a home for a year. She subsequently did this and we moved into it. When the year had expired, she sent for me again, and I went to see her. She then asked if I was satisfied with Germantown as a Mission center, and I said, "Yes." At this she offered to buy the Mission a property; and she eventually brought this to pass by purchasing us a home at 235 School Lane. Later she bought an additional piece of land in the rear of the lot; and still later she purchased the adjoining house at 237 School Lane. Her total gift to the Mission, in these connections, amounted to \$30,600.

There are a few things about the foregoing story which deserve attention. First, I did not ask any money from either of the persons who gave to us. Second, I did not even make our Mission needs known to these friends until they had asked me questions which called for answers. Third, I prayed specifically for each home which was given to us. Fourth I established my faith through inspiration, that is, through a promise of God as found in the Word of God. Fifth, God kept me waiting long — ten and more years — for his answers, but when they were received, they came almost with a rush. And lastly, such simple prayer and trust as were displayed by me were followed by miraculous providences, and by provisions beyond what I had asked for or even imagined. Evidently then, inspiration is perfect, and being this, is wonderfully effective in finding and obtaining the will of God. We have then in prayer creation, conscience, providence and inspiration; but the greatest of these is inspiration.

VII
PRAYER CONDITIONS

VII

PRAYER CONDITIONS

*"If we ask anything according to his will, he
heareth us"*

In the previous chapter, we spoke of prayer-principles. These, as we saw, were prayer-conditions. But it is clear that those which were mentioned were of a general kind. In this chapter we desire to speak of other prayer-conditions; and those which will be described will be of a particular kind. For within the requisites of God are both larger and smaller ones; the first, being connected with prayer as a whole, and the second, with its various parts. Thus, it proves to be a case — using Ezekiel's phraseology — of "a wheel in the middle of a wheel" (Ezek. 1 : 16). Nevertheless, it is true of these condition-wheels — continuing Ezekiel's phraseology — that "Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went" (Ezek. 1 : 20). In other words, God has affixed to prayer many conditions, some larger and some smaller; but, in doing this, he has put all under the governance of the Holy Spirit and has made each one to move toward the fulfilment of the Word's prayer-promises. Our theme then, just now, is that

of various specific conditions found in Holy Scripture as related to the practice of prayer. We would state these as follows:

We must, as we pray, be worshipers of God in the Spirit and in Christ: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit [the natural spirit as indwelt by the Holy Spirit] and in truth [in Christ]" (John 4 : 24). In other words, we must be Christians in order to pray; and we must be worshiping Christians in order to pray effectively.

We must not, while we pray, harbor sin in the heart: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psa. 66 : 18). This does not mean that the one who offers prayer must be sinless in order to pray, else none might pray. The word "regard" in the Hebrew is *râ'âh*, and signifies to see, with the implication of seeing joyfully, or with satisfaction. The verse, therefore, contemplates a wilful beholding of sin in the life and a persistent clinging to it; and it needs no great consideration to lead one to the conclusion that the sinless God cannot commune, in prayer or otherwise, with such a person.

We must confess, before and as we pray, all known sin. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1 : 9). "Confess your faults one to another" (Jas. 5 : 16). "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that

thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5 : 23, 24). This is drastic teaching, for few things in our experience are harder to perform than to make confession of sin, first to God, and then, if need be, to our fellow man. And as between the two, it is harder to confess to man than to God, for we know that God has already seen our sin and we are assured that he will be quick to forgive, while our fellow man may not know it except as we confess it and he may be very slow to forgive. Nevertheless, the confession must be made if forgiveness is to be obtained, and forgiveness must be had if our prayers are to be acceptable before God. It is a sad fact that this is where many saints fail and where they pronounce their own doom, so far as power in prayer is concerned. On the other hand, it is a glad fact that this is where some saints have won notable victories in prayer, and where they have set themselves free for prayer with the liberty wherewith Christ makes men free.

We must, in the act of prayer, draw nigh to God with our confidence fixed solely upon the person and shed blood of Christ: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his

flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10 : 9-22). Here it is made plain that our acceptance in the act of prayer is not found in ourselves, or in our utterances, or in our emotions, or in our earnestness, but only and ever in the high-priestly personality of Christ and in his sacrificial offering of himself in our behalf. Outside of him and without his atonement we should have no right to approach God; but with him and with his atonement, we have the standing before God which he has, and thus a perfect acceptance in the act of prayer.

We must, in the practice of prayer, cast ourselves upon God's grace: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4 : 16). It is never to be forgotten that we, being sinners, have forfeited all right to God's consideration and blessing. What we receive from him, therefore, is all of grace, as when a beggar receives the largess of a king. Apart from this grace, we could have no welcome in the presence of God, and hence, no boldness before him; but with it, we may have such welcome as Christ has, and may exercise such boldness as he does. This is a wonderful transformation, from unrighteousness to righteousness, from distance to nearness, from emptiness to fulness, from

poverty to wealth. But such is grace. And happy the man who remembers this grace before the throne of grace.

We must, in prayer, secure and maintain communion with God through Christ: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15 : 7). In the natural life, the child who communes most with the father and mother gets most from them. The other children, almost without asking, enjoy the possession of home and raiment and food. But the one child, obeying, serving, seeking to give joy to his parents, and entering into the larger and deeper things of their lives, obtains these gifts and much besides. Thus it is in God's family. It does not take much praying, obeying, or serving to secure the necessities of life from God, for his grace is very great and his love is wondrous kind. But it takes an amplitude of these virtues, if one is to enter into the larger meaning of life with God, including power in prayer. For this, we must dwell deep (John 5 : 39), and we must let the word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. 3 : 16), since thus only may we come to know God, and the secrets of his holy will and ways. As union leads to communion, so communion leads to union; and it is out of such a union in the midst of communion that "the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (James 5 : 16, R. V.).

We must, when we pray, consciously identify ourselves with Christ: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16 : 23). Praying in the name of Christ is far more than saying at the end of our petition, "And this we ask in Jesus' name, Amen!" There is no reason why we should not pray thus; and there is every reason why we should. But in the heavenly courts it must ever be and it ever is a question as to what we mean by our phrase, and whether or not we use it intelligently and in faith. The name of Jesus, be it remembered, stands for his person; and hence, to ask in his name means to ask in his person. And this must be our understanding of the phrase, if we are to offer acceptable and efficient prayer before God. It is like a man who has been given by a rich friend a signed check for so many hundreds of dollars, and who presents the check to the cashier of the bank which holds the friend's deposit. The cashier, beyond identifying the man who presents the check, takes no notice of him, whether he be rich or poor, well dressed or badly dressed, clean or dirty. What he does is to look at the signed name on the check, and, if he is satisfied with it, he pays the man waiting before his wicket, whoever and whatever he is, the money the check calls for. And the reason he does this is that the man who presents the check, for the time being and to the amount of the check, is in effect the man who drew

the check and signed his name to it. So it is in prayer. Christ has attached his name to the promises of God, and he gives us the privilege of presenting these to his and our Father, with his name so affixed. It is not a question then as to who and what we are. The only question is, Who and what is Christ? And to this question we have God's answer from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3 : 17). In other words, to the degree, in prayer, that we hold forth the name of Christ, and thus identify ourselves with the person of Christ, we shall be heard and answered. For in such a case it is not we who ask, but Christ; and God cannot and will not refuse him.

We must, when we pray, believe that we shall receive: "Without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11 : 6). "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. 21 : 22). It is a popular notion that prayer will be answered in the measure that it is characterized by intensity. One would not speak a word against intensity, for if such be the product of the Holy Spirit, it should possess us through and through. At the same time, we must call attention to the fact that this emotion, or emotionalism of any kind, is not a requisite of prayer, or an efficient cause of answered prayer. Habakkuk said it over six hundred

years before the time of Christ, and Paul said it three times over shortly after the time of Christ, that "the just shall live by faith" (Hab. 2 : 4; Rom. 1 : 17; Gal. 3 : 11; Heb. 10 : 38); and this life of faith has just as full an application to prayer as to any other spiritual experience. Faith then, in the act of prayer, is the essential part of it, all other parts being non-essential, and, therefore, incidental. It will be for our advantage if we keep this fact in mind; for if we hold any other view of prayer, first, we shall not pray at our best, and then, by erecting false standards which are impossible to maintain, we shall throw ourselves open to disappointment, if not to great distress. A friend of Mr. Hudson Taylor once asked him if he ever prayed without conscious joy. Mr. Taylor replied, "Often. Sometimes I pray on with my heart feeling like wood. Often, too, the most wonderful answers have come when prayer has been a real effort of faith without any joy whatever." Joy — and every other emotion — may come and go. But God does not come and go; he remaineth (Heb. 1 : 11), and also, he abideth faithful (2 Tim. 2 : 13). Therefore, our faith, whatever our emotion or whatever our lack of emotion, may ever be fixed upon him; and it is faith which ensures answers to our prayers.

As to the matter of faith, Mr. Hudson Taylor used to give this definition of it: "Faith is reckoning on God's faithfulness." And as to how faith is

obtained, Paul tells us that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10 : 17). In prayer, therefore, we are called upon, whatever other spiritual experiences we may pass through, to hold steadily to and rest fully upon the unbreakable promises of God. This is what Sara did when, in answer to her and Abraham's prayer, God had promised her a child. From the natural standpoint, she being "past age," it was impossible for her to hope that she might become a mother. But from the spiritual standpoint, in spite of old age, it was both possible and certain. So it says in Scripture, "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised" (Heb. 11 : 11). These words, by taking the first clause and the last, give us an accurate and beautiful definition of faith: "Through faith . . . she judged him faithful who had promised"; which is exactly what Mr. Taylor said faith is, namely, a reckoning on God's faithfulness. This then, is the conquest of faith in prayer; a turning away, so far as confidence is concerned, from every subjective experience to the single objective one of believing that God is, and that he will both keep and fulfil the promises which he has made. What God will sometimes bring to pass in answer to prayer is illustrated by the following story:

Some years ago when I was living in the Mis-

sion Home in Germantown, there came to the door a Mr. X, who asked to see me. Being ushered by the maid into the parlor where I was sitting, I saw standing before me a person who had the saddest face I had ever looked upon. After a few general remarks, Mr. X told me why he had called upon me. His tale was as follows: He had a daughter of perhaps thirty-five years of age, who had graduated from an eastern college, had specialized there in modern languages, had studied in France, had come back to the college as a teacher, had had there a phenomenal success, and then, suddenly, had gone out of her mind. This last had happened some five years before, and during those years, not being violently insane, she had been kept in her father's home. Many physicians, including notable mental specialists, had seen her, and all, finally, had pronounced her incurable. The father and mother were heart-broken, and the poor father wanted to know if I would pray for the daughter's healing.

My heart, of course, was much touched, and I readily agreed to offer prayer for the daughter's recovery. But I had to explain to my friend that I could not conscientiously claim healing, and that the most that I could do was to ask for it in the name of Christ and then submissively wait the manifestation of his will. Mr. X assured me that he did not wish me to pray in any other way. At this we

knelt in prayer, I praying and then he doing so. After this, we arose; and a little later we parted, each of us wondering what the effect of our prayer would be. Nine months passed away without my seeing Mr. X or hearing from him. At the end of that time he presented himself at our door as before. But, as I looked upon him, I saw a transformed man, for his face was radiant with joy. He then told me the following remarkable story:

He went from our home to his own, the night he left me, to find his daughter as she had been before. A few days thereupon passed away without a change in her condition, she being rather the worse because of a nervous shock she had received. But on a following evening, as she was passing through her father's study, she suddenly put her hand to her forehead, looked at her father with her old-time intelligence, and said, "Father, I don't know what has happened to me; a great cloud has been lifted from my mind, and all the darkness has gone." From that hour she had been perfectly recovered, her mentality becoming all that it had previously been. Then Mr. X said, "I wanted to tell you this nine months ago, but I have waited to make sure that the cure was permanent." Two years later, I made inquiries concerning Miss X's condition. The father meanwhile had died; but the brother assured me that his sister was remaining perfectly well.

Now, the point of the story is this. The father

and I did not claim healing; nor were we assured that God would grant it; nor was there on my part any particular feeling as I prayed; nor was our prayer prolonged or specially intense. All was very simple, such as any other prayer might be. The one thing which was true was this; we did trust God, and, in this spirit, we loyally and lovingly left the issue with him. Judging then from this experience we may conclude that it is faith, simple, quiet, restful, trustful faith, which brings forth from God the answer to our prayers. And it may be added that no more faith, if it be of the right sort, is required for the large answers than for the small, the miraculous element in God's answering, when it exists, being the outcome, not of our greatness in believing, but of his sovereignty and faithfulness in giving.

We must, as we pray, be patient to wait God's time for answering prayer: "He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18 : 1). Why did Christ speak this parable, not only about praying, but also about not fainting? Was it not that he knew that praying and not receiving an immediate answer to the prayers offered naturally tended to fainting, which result was to be guarded against? A study of the parable leads to this conclusion, the unjust judge not answering at first, but only after a considerable delay because the widow troubled him (Luke 18 : 3-5). God is not an unjust judge; he

does not delay his answers because he is not willing to give; and he does not finally give because he is troubled. Nevertheless, he does often postpone answering, and this deferring of an answer calls for repeated petitions on the part of the supplicator. So frequently it happens that the heart is sorely tried and the soul is sadly tempted to doubt.

This probably has been the experience of all of us. And it is well to remember that the long delay which has come to us has been the experience which has fallen to the lot of most saints. For instance, Paul had to pray three times about his thorn in the flesh before he got his answer — his three prayers may have been long apart — and when finally he obtained his reply it was one of a negative kind, so far as healing is concerned (2 Cor. 12 : 7-9). Abraham prayed that he and his seed might inherit the land of promise, but he was told by God that such could not take place for four hundred years to come, until his people had been in Egypt and the iniquity of the Amorites had become full (Gen. 15 : 12-16). Daniel prayed for seventy years before he saw his people set free from Babylon and restored to their native land; and, toward the end of that time, he was told that "seventy weeks," or four hundred and ninety years were determined upon his people before they could reach the consummation of their restoration-blessings (Dan. 9 : 20-27), which time, because of the interjected Christian era, has stretched out

to over two thousand years. And, to take a sublime example, we may assume that Christ fulfilled in the days of his flesh the injunction of the second Psalm and asked God that the heathen might be his inheritance (Psa. 2 : 8) ; but he still waits the answer to his prayer, though nearly two thousand years have passed since he breathed it, and God alone knows how much longer he will have to wait before the promised inheritance is his.

It is evident from these scriptural examples that God frequently postpones giving his prayer-answers, even in the case of spiritual praying. Indeed, judging from modern experiences he delays replying more often than otherwise. Why he takes this line of things it is not easy to understand. We may be assured that he does not do so because he is ruthless in action and delights in disappointing us, for his character does not suggest the possibility of such a conclusion. We may conclude, rather, that it is for some wise reason known to him that he cannot answer at once, in spite of his desire to do so. It appears to have been so in the case of Abraham, Daniel, and Paul ; and surely it must be so in the case of Christ. God, manifestly, has many things and persons to consider before he may put into movement the answer to an individual's prayer ; and, if the answer is not delayed because of other persons, it may be deferred for the individual's own sake. He had the Amorites' need of repentance and final judg-

ment in mind when he postponed the fruition of Abraham's petition; and again he had Paul's best interests in mind when he wholly refused healing and gave him instead his sufficiency of grace. So God's prayer-disappointments are often his prayer-appointments, and these last are always for ultimate blessing. That is a notable word of James where he says, "Ye . . . have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (Jas. 5 : 11). Mark it, it does not say that we see this at the beginning, but at the end. And God asks us, when we have offered our prayers, to wait patiently for this end, whether it is to be reached in a shorter or a longer time.

We must be prepared, as we pray, to let God decide what the answer will be; and, if he thinks best, to give us, positively, finally and even eternally, the answer, No: "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26 : 39). It is a common thought with those who pray that prayer is not worth while unless we can get what we ask for. There is a substance of truth in this idea as derived from the frequency of answered prayer, for it is true that it does often mean our obtaining what we desire. But when we press the thought to the conclusion that praying must always mean receiving, we are far apart from God's mind and practice. The verse we have quoted above indicates that Christ was quite prepared to pray without obtaining. Paul's

experience of patience and acquiescence when he prayed for the removal of the thorn in his flesh proves that he was. Indeed, we could cite scores of cases in the Old and New Testaments where saints were in the dark as they prayed and even after they had done so, and where they found it their highest satisfaction to leave the issue to their heavenly Father and to receive finally, a divine refusal.

In the nature of the case, this must be the attitude which we are called upon to assume. If we knew, when we pray, as much as God knows, there would be no need for us to pray, for we should be God. It is because we are not God that we need to pray; that is, it is because we are creatures and not the Creator, because we are dependent and not independent, because we are ignorant and not all-wise. Being thus limited, we come to God, not simply for this or that thing, but also and particularly for the wisdom which we need in order to ask for the right thing and for the patience which we need in order to wait for the divine revealing. Now, there are two ways in which God, as we seek for this light, could lighten our darkness; he could speak from heaven and tell us what and what not to ask for, and also, what will be his ultimate will; or he could remain silent as to an audible voice, and then reveal his will to us through the gradual unfolding of his providences. In the Old Testament period — the kindergarten times of spiritual experience — he frequently

spoke aloud from heaven. But in these New Testament times — when the saints are supposed to be, and should be, spiritually matured — he does not so speak, but generally gives his answer by slow processes, unfolding it before our eyes as we watch his ways through his dealings with us. And the sad thing about it is that most of us want to go back to the old-time infantile experiences rather than be the new-time full-grown men God would have us be; and the yet sadder thing is that when our Father gently insists upon taking with us the more excellent way, that often we misunderstand his purpose and even doubt his love. We need then, to lay it upon our hearts as infinite truth: God is alone wise; his is the right of decision; he will keep our every interest in mind; and his delays and even his denials will be as kind and tender as his immediate and bountiful givings might be.

VIII
PRAYER PRIVILEGES

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"Let your requests be made known unto God"

All prayer is a privilege. But comparisons are to be made between good things as well as bad, and so one privilege may be greater than another. Hence it is that one experience of prayer may be good, another better, and another best. It is this thought of degree in the midst of efficacious prayer which now will be in mind.

It is our privilege to pray to God. And not all praying is such. Some prayers are offered to self, where prayer is a species of good works, and where the main objective, as it is with the heathen, is to satisfy the soul by praying so regularly, so frequently, so extensively, or so fervently. And some prayers, in public places, are offered to men, as was the case with a certain clergyman who was said to have made the best prayer that was ever addressed to a Boston audience. John had to be taught the lesson of God-concentration twice over, when he was on the isle of Patmos, and even when he was in a Spirit-filled state, for he bowed and worshiped an angel, and had to be told to worship God (Rev. 19 : 10; 22 : 8,

9). We judge from this that it is not altogether easy to keep a single eye toward God in the act of prayer. Nevertheless, we are to do so. And the divine Spirit is able to bring this to pass, by delivering us from self-consciousness and man-consciousness and making us God-conscious.

It is our privilege to pray naturally. It has been said that every man needs two conversions, one from the natural to the supernatural, and the other from the supernatural back to the natural. This saying is not altogether true, for we should be at the same time both natural and supernatural. However, there is an aspect of truth about it, since most Christians are extremists; and fervent Christians, in the pursuit of the supernatural, are apt to become unnatural. We are to remember then that supernaturalism does not mean denaturalization, but the contrary. And this is particularly true in respect to prayer. Prayer is the talk of a child to his heavenly Father, and it ought to be, in its essence, the most simple thing in the world. And yet we are prone to make it otherwise. Most of us, by nature, are actors, and we are often tempted when we pray to indulge in stage play, especially in public places. As opposed to this, it should be our longing and effort to be what we are, namely, little children, telling out our desires, in natural tones and words, as an earthly child does to an earthly father. It is said that Abraham Lincoln, when he was a boy, prayed

thus: "God help father, help mother, help sister, help everybody. Teach me to read and write. Watch over Honey and make him a good dog. And keep us all from getting lost in the wilderness. Amen." This was truly a great prayer, for it was simple, direct and trustful.

It is our privilege to pray definitely. If we "make" prayers, we are apt to pray for what we do not particularly want, just to fill up time and space. If we pray to men, we are likely to pass into the realm of oratory, where we are exhorting persons, rather than praying to God, and hence, petitioning ineffectually. In this way we are quite sure to be caught in the snare of asking for nothing — and getting it. It is a good thing to pray for the President or King; but not when we ought to be asking for some blessing which we ourselves need. And again, it is a good thing to pray for ourselves; but not when we ought to be asking blessing for the President or King. What, for instance, if Peter, when he was sinking beneath the wave, had suddenly cried out: "God save the king!" If he had done so, it is probable that neither Peter nor the king would have seen God's salvation. We should mean what we say, and say what we mean.

It is our privilege to pray everywhere. The Jews of old were to pray in Jerusalem and at their temple. And if a Jew was away from home, like Daniel in Babylon, he had to open his windows toward Jeru-

saalem and direct his petitions toward the temple's holy place. But now all is changed. We Christians may pray at Jerusalem, as some of us have found; and we may pray just as well in China, as also some of us have found. Paul wrote, "I will that men pray *every where*" (1 Tim. 2 : 8), which means that God will set up his sanctuary for the praying saint at any place, the world over. And it also means, so far as a given locality is concerned, that he is ready to meet with the intercessor in all possible environments, in the church, in the chapel, in the home, in the street, in the shop, anywhere. One of the best praying saints I ever knew, Robert Garry, of Lockport, New York, did most of his praying behind his turning-lathe and in the din of a great machine shop. It is to be remembered that the Spirit is omnipresent, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, in prayer and otherwise, there is liberty (2 Cor. 3 : 17).

It is our privilege to pray about everything. What concerns God should concern us. And what concerns us does most certainly concern God. Out of this mutual concern springs commonality of desire. And out of commonality of desire arises commonality of thought and expression. We may pray, therefore, for everything which makes for the glory of God. And also we may pray for everything which we believe will make for our good. This includes the great things. It also includes the little things, which,

for the most part, make up life. Paul prayed this great prayer, namely, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times God might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him (Eph. 1 : 10). He also prayed this little prayer, namely, that the thorn in his flesh might be removed from him (2 Cor. 12 : 7-10). And as touching ourselves, he said, "In *every thing* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4 : 6). God then, is interested in all that his children are interested in, provided they are living in fellowship with him; and hence, he would have them bring their heart-concerns to him, whatever they are. Mr. Hudson Taylor prayed that the fast-closed doors of China might be opened; and they were opened. He also prayed, on one occasion, for a lost and needed pin; and he found it.

It is our privilege to pray continually. The apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, wrote, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5 : 17). And it is to be noted that the word is more than a permission or exhortation; that it is actually a commandment. It is not optional with us, therefore, whether we shall or shall not so pray. If we are at all right with God, we must keep this commandment, as every other one, and pray unceasingly. This constitutes, of course, a difficulty. But divine difficulties are not impossibilities. Indeed, they are always possibilities, things

which being commanded may be done. In this case the main part of the solution of the difficulty is to be found in the correct understanding which we may have of the commandment. As to this, it does not mean being always on one's knees; nor thinking always of God and praying consciously to him; nor being preoccupied always with spiritual things as compared with secular things. Praying without ceasing certainly implies stated times of prayer; and also, the forming of the habit of frequent prayer. But in addition to these attainments, it includes our heart attitude after we have prayed, and our life obedience concerning the things for which we have prayed. If we pray for holiness and then carelessly give ourselves to ruthless tempers of spirit and speech, we have neither prayed continually nor at all. But if we pray for holiness and then resolutely devote ourselves to the practice of the same, we have prayed and we continue to pray. If again, we pray to God to be used by him in service, and then at the first God-given opportunity of rendering such, shrink back and refuse it, we have neither prayed continually nor at all. But if we pray for service and then obediently do the thing which God tells us to do, we have prayed and we continue to pray.

With such praying, we pray when we are on our feet as well as when we are on our knees; when we are unconscious of praying as well as when we are conscious; when we are asleep as well as when we

are awake. In other words, the praying which God counts continual praying is first, when we offer our petitions and, second, when we confirm such by our actions. That is, for us to pray and then to live as we pray is to pray unceasingly. The high priest put incense on the golden altar only twice a day, in the morning and evening. But he did this in the morning for the whole of the day, and in the evening for the whole of the night. After this the fire did all the rest, making the incense to rise in the nostrils of God continually. So with prayer. We pray at stated times; but in doing so, if we pray aright, we pray for all times. After this, if we live out our prayers in the spirit of prayer the Holy Spirit offers them to God without ceasing.

It is our privilege to pray according to the divine will. It is not easy to know the mind and ways of God. His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor are his ways as our ways (Isa. 55:8, 9). We need, therefore, the illuminating of the Holy Spirit, so that his supernatural wisdom may displace our natural unwisdom. And this is the purpose of God, as related to prayer in giving us the Holy Spirit, this divine person teaching us what we are and what we are not to pray for (Rom. 8:26, 27). As to this teaching, it is given to us through the Word (John 5:39; 15:7), and as a result of fellowship with God (John 7:17). Let me illustrate: I lived with my beloved father for many years. In my youth I often made

strange requests of him, to which he had to say, No. But in later years these requests were dropped out of my petitioning, and better asking took their place, to which my father said a ready and glad, Yes. Now the change of my petitioning took place, not by my father's telling me, categorically, what I should or should not ask for, but simply as a result of his living with me and my living with him. In other words, our life together led to my hearing my father's words and seeing his ways, and thus, to my becoming acquainted with his likes and dislikes; and this intercourse taught me what and what not to ask of him. So it is with ourselves and God. If we have daily companionship with our heavenly Father, we shall come to know him. Through the Word, we shall hear him speak to us, and through constant and familiar intercourse with him we shall increasingly appreciate what he desires and does not desire. All this will lead to an ever enlarging accuracy in praying, early ignorance giving place to later wisdom. Thus, more and more, we shall not ask what is not God's will, and we shall ask what is. And when we pray like this, be it noted with thankfulness, we immediately have the petitions we desired of him (1 John 5 : 14, 15).

It is our privilege to pray boldly. It is often said that beggars must not be choosers. But here is a place where beggars may be choosers. And beggars we are when we come before the throne of grace,

otherwise grace is no more grace. Nevertheless, because grace is grace, the beggar-petitioner may come, find acceptance, ask, and ask boldly. Sir Walter Raleigh once made a new and large request of Queen Elizabeth. The Queen petulantly answered, "Oh, Raleigh, when will you leave off begging?" Sir Walter immediately replied, "When your Majesty leaves off giving"; and he got his request. But the God of all grace never grows weary of our asking and he never rebukes us for coming. On the contrary, the more we come and the more we ask, the better pleased he is. This is grace upon grace. So then before such grace and before such a God of grace, we may become more and more bold in our petitioning. But to the very end we are to remember that we are beggars, and we are to make sure to keep the beggar's place. For it is only the beggar to whom is outstretched the golden scepter and to whom is given the king's largess (Heb. 4 : 14-16).

It is our privilege to have every prayer answered. This seems startlingly untrue. But it is not; it is startlingly true. In the first place, Christ said that we should be universally answered: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7); "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16 : 23). And in the second place, not a few saints, beginning with Paul, have found universal answering on the part of God a fact.

However, we must be careful to remember what true prayer is. If prayer is only what is expressed upon our lips, then we may not have every prayer answered. But if prayer is what is expressed upon our lips plus what is unexpressed within our hearts, then we may have every prayer answered. Christ prayed that the cup might pass from him, but he added to this his, "Nevertheless," and it was the lip-prayer plus the heart-prayer which God answered (Matt. 26 : 38-42). Paul prayed three times that the thorn in the flesh might be removed; but he never prayed the fourth time, for the reason that all of the time he supremely desired the divine will and was really seeking this, and it was his lip-prayer plus his heart-prayer which God finally answered (2 Cor. 12 : 7-10). Ignorance of God's perfect will may put malformed words upon our lips. But the wisdom which is from above may all the while be dwelling richly in our hearts, for it is to be remembered that no man may ever have greater wisdom than this, namely, the fear of God and the desire to keep his commandments (Psa. 111 : 10). If then, this devotedness, as we pray, is in our hearts, it is a secondary matter what may be upon our lips. In short, willing the will of God within our hearts, we shall secure that will always and abundantly.

It is our privilege to trust even when our prayers are not answered. Unanswered prayer is often not unanswered prayer, but simply prayer delayed in

its answer. Mr. George Müller prayed for the conversion of a friend for over forty years and then his prayer was answered; which meant that God had heard from the beginning and was but waiting an opportune time to act. Mr. Hudson Taylor prayed for the conversion of a son from the time of the boy's birth until that of his own death, and he never saw him saved. But the son accepted Christ shortly after his father's death; which meant that God had not denied the prayers which had been breathed, but only had postponed answering them till the best time for saving had come. At times, however, God's best answer is denial. My little boy once brought me a razor which he had found in our guest room; and, as I sought to take it from him, he closed his baby hand about it and plead in his baby way that he might keep it. I answered his pleading by forcing his fingers apart, taking the razor from him and putting it far out of his reach. Then I gave him another plaything, as amusing as the other, and a good deal less dangerous. Our prayers, as God sees them, often amount to our asking for bright, shining, pretty, but cutting razors; and it is no wonder that God denies our requests for such things and insists upon giving us something else which will be more for our good. I am glad to say that I had the satisfaction of seeing that my little boy acquiesced in my act of denial and that he was reconciled to it. But God often has no such

satisfaction with us, seeing nothing but frowns and pouts, and hearing nothing but insistent pleadings, and then distrustful complaints. Such action on our part is surely to grieve our best Friend. Now, the lesson from all this is a twofold one: first, when prayer is unanswered, we are not to judge God too quickly; and second, when prayer remains unanswered, we are not to judge him at all. Whether or not we understand him, we may ever depend upon his love and wisdom. When, then, we have prayed we are to wait for the divine revealing, whether it be granting or withholding, in full confidence and unfailing patience.

It is our privilege to praise as we pray. David said, "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psa. 34 : 1). Paul said, "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4 : 6); and again, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5 : 20); and again, "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5 : 18). But we say, Praise was easy for David and Paul, for the one was a king upon a throne, and the other was an apostle of high position and special privilege. This is good arguing except for some vital facts in the case: David, when he wrote his words of praise, was not a king upon a throne,

but was a fugitive in a foreign land; and, in order to save his life, was changing his behavior before the king of Gath, feigning himself to be mad, scrabbling upon the doors of the gate, and letting the spittle run down upon his beard (Psa. 34: headnote; 1 Sam. 21: 10-15). And as for Paul, he wrote his words of praise in a Roman dungeon, in the cold and damp, and with the vermin about him. It is clear then, that it was not so easy for David and Paul to pray and praise. Nevertheless, they prayed, and they praised as they prayed. And this is the reason why they have a right to tell us to do the same, for they practised what they preached. Moreover, their practising shows us that praising, even in adverse circumstances, can be done; for these men, like ourselves, were made of flesh and blood, and it was as hard for them as for us to mingle praise with prayer, especially when darkness and sorrow were round about them.

We are to understand then, that we may do exactly what Paul admonishes us to do, offer our prayers and supplications with thanksgiving, and give God thanks always and for all things. This implies that we may praise when days are bright, and when they are dark; when things go right and when they go wrong; when we are in joy and when we are in sorrow; when God seems near and when he seems far away; when it is easy to understand and when it is impossible to understand. At all such times we cer-

tainly may pray. And at all such times we certainly may interject praise into prayer, often, not because we know God's ways, but always, because we know him. Mr. Hudson Taylor, when once he was very sick at Chevalleyres, Switzerland, said to his wife: "I cannot read; I cannot pray; I can scarcely think"; and then he added with a radiant smile upon his face, "but I can trust." And it is such trusting as this that leads the soul to believing prayer, and then to put within the prayer triumphant praise.

We said at the beginning of the chapter that privileges had their degrees. We have seen this as we have gone on. For we have discovered a steady increase of privilege, each one being greater than the one which went before. We sum up then, by saying that we need to count all prayer a privilege; to go on unto perfection from one privilege to another; and above all, to consider it our chiefest privilege, when we pray, to give God the praise which is his most just due.

IX

PRAYER WONDERS

IX

PRAYER WONDERS

*"This kind goeth not forth but by prayer
and fasting"*

We cannot read the Old and New Testaments without being impressed by the fact that the Holy Spirit, in unfolding his portrayals, brings before the spiritual vision two great worlds, one seen and the other unseen. The seen world is that which has to do with places upon the earth; with their national divisions, their country spaces, their cities, their kings, queens, judges, priests, prophets, and peoples, their religiousness and irreligiousness, their loves and hatreds, their alliances and wars, and finally, their deaths and burials. The unseen is that which has to do with places in the heavenlies; with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, with the general assembly and church of the first-born, with archangels and angels, with Satan, with fallen angels, and with demon spirits. As to the visible, it does not seem strange to us, for it is the world in which we live and the one which we see with our physical eyes. As to the invisible, it seems so strange that it appears almost unreal and unbelievable, for we see it only with the

eyes of faith, and thus with a preception that is dimmed. And yet a careful study of the Scriptures leaves us with the impression that the heavenly world, though unseen, is as real, if not more real than the earthly.

The reading of the Old and New Testaments also impresses us with the fact that within the seen and unseen worlds are resident two great forces, the one of light and the other of darkness, the one of good and the other of evil. Also we see that these forces are antagonistic to each other, the one warring against the other, and each seeking to conquer the other. Moreover, we discern that Christ is at the head of one of these great powers, and Satan of the other, and that the followers of each are innumerable. And finally we discover that the conflict which is raging originates in heavenly places, and that its objective is earth and the sons of men. It is this last fact that led Paul to speak as he did when he wrote to the Corinthians and said — translating his words literally — “We are made a theater unto the world, both to angels and men” (1 Cor. 4 : 9), where the apostle had the conception that the apostles, and thus the church at large, were acting out a great drama, at which men and angels were intently gazing in order to discover what the final issue would be.

Christ, in the days of his flesh, was evidently very conscious of the invisible world, and also of the conflict being waged in and from it between the opposing

forces of good and evil. As to the forces of good he spoke in this wise: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18 : 10); "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels" (Matt. 26 : 53); "Then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven" (Mark 13 : 27). As to the forces of evil, he spoke in this wise: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14 : 30); "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12 : 31); "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10 : 18); "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8 : 44); "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none; then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and

the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation" (Matt. 12 : 43-45).

Paul's revelations are as distinct as those made by Christ when he was on earth, and they are somewhat more detailed. The apostle wrote as follows as to the good forces: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1 : 14.) And he wrote as follows as to the evil forces: "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11 : 14); "The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2 : 2); "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us" (1 Thess. 2 : 18); "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4 : 4); "To deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh" (1 Cor. 5 : 5); "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4 : 1); "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6 : 11); "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness,

against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6 : 12, R. V.).

John's revelations concerning the unseen world are the most ample of those given in the Word of God. We can quote but few of these, for to give the whole would mean the printing of the book of the Revelation. For this portion of Scripture is a veritable apocalypse, that is, an unveiling; and through it we see otherwise invisible realms, and behold therein powers of good and evil of countless numbers and in deadly conflict. Here is one passage of this kind: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels; and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12 : 7-9). And here is another passage: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sat on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to

make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceiveth them that had received the mark of the beast, and they that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19 : 17-20). And here is a further passage: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20 : 7-10).

The matter which must now engage our attention, as the outcome of the foregoing passages, is the place, according to the Word, which prayer has in deciding the high and mighty issues which are manifestly at stake. It may be taken for granted that the forces of good and evil in the seen world, and especially in the unseen, have a determining factor of some sort, aside from that which lies within

the eternal counsels of God. And a careful study of the Scriptures indicates that this is the case. How deeply solemnizing it is, therefore, to discover that this factor is the prayer which may or may not be offered by earth-dwelling saints. Let us prove this by citing certain historical examples from the Word of God.

Job lived consciously face to face with invisible powers, and it is evident that he finally won his victory over them through prayer (Job 1 : 1-22; 42 : 1-17). Abraham, foreseeing impending judgments from the unseen world, prayed for Lot and his family and thus snatched them from the very jaws of death (Gen. 18 : 23-33). Moses was intimately connected with the unseen world, passing frequently into the presence of God and communing with him face to face, and acting there and thus as an intercessor in behalf of his people and thereby standing repeatedly between the living and the dead (Exod. 32 : 30-35). Daniel many times wrestled in prayer with invisible forces, and by this means set up and cast down kingdoms and finally delivered his people from the captivity of Babylon (Dan. 2 : 14-23; 6 : 10-13; 9 : 20-23; 10 : 10-21). Stephen by prayer — as Christ had done before him — held back destruction from the people of Israel, when judgment from the unseen world was about to fall upon them (Acts 7 : 54-60). Paul in prayer, like Moses, often stood between the living and the dead,

securing a postponement of God's rejection of Israel and thus sparing that nation from impending destruction (Rom. 9 : 1-3; 10 : 1). The apostle who realized as none other of his day what prayer meant as related to the opposing forces of right and wrong, plead with the saints to take up the unfinished task of intercession and to pray for all men everywhere (1 Tim. 2 : 1-4, 8). And John, in two remarkable passages of Scripture, tells us that the ascending prayers of God's earthly saints and their presentation before the throne of heaven will, at the last, greatly stir the heavenly courts (Rev. 5 : 8-14) and will actually set into movement the final judgments of God upon ungodly men (Rev. 8 : 3-6).

In all of the above passages of Scripture, we note that intercession has affected and controlled, and will affect and control great powers of good and evil in both the seen and unseen worlds. They are thus an illustration of what Paul said in his second letter to the Corinthians: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10 : 3-5). This passage of Scripture reveals the fact that the only effective weapons in this spiritual warfare, are spiritual ones; and it is

clear from other scriptures that these weapons may largely be described by the one word, prayer.

It was the apostles' consciousness of the above facts which made praying in their time so vital, and often, so intense. Prayer in those early days was, at times, very simple, having to do with lower and lesser affairs. But at other times it was very complex, having to do with higher and greater affairs, indeed with issues which were nothing less than infinite and eternal. In consequence of this last, we find in the Word such facts as the following: Peter and Paul exhorted their followers to "watch unto prayer" (Eph. 6 : 18; Col. 4 : 2; 1 Pet. 4 : 7), taking up thus the words, "watch and pray," which their Master had so often used (Matt. 26 : 41; Mark 13 : 33; 14 : 33-38; Luke 21 : 36), and meaning thereby, be sleepless unto prayer. Paul, for various persons, prayed "exceedingly" (1 Thess. 3 : 10), "without ceasing" (2 Tim. 1 : 3), and "day and night" (1 Thess. 3 : 10; 2 Tim. 1 : 3). The apostle, in asking prayer for himself, besought the Roman Christians to strive, or struggle with him in prayer (Rom. 15 : 30). And Epaphras, the bondsman of Christ, actually agonized in prayer (1 Thess. 5 : 12, Gr.). It is evident from these various statements that the apostles and early disciples realized that the conflict between Christ and his followers, on the one hand, and Satan and his, on the other, was in a realm which physical power could not touch, and that

no conquest therein could be obtained except as saints strove and prevailed in intercession before the throne of grace. It was from this realization that their prayer practice and prayer exhortations sprang. They prayed as men go out to battle, armed and set for the fray; and they exhorted as men fight in battle, with the realization that great issues were at stake. They often offered prayer, therefore, with great strenuousness because intent upon winning the victory. And it is evident that God would have us follow in their train.

Manoah, when he had seen the wonderful workings of the Lord said, "What is thy name?" And the angel of the Lord answered, "Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is Wonderful?" (Judg. 13 : 17, 18, margin). Be it remembered that the name of our Christ is still Wonderful (Isa. 9 : 6), and that it is yet true that he is ever ready and willing to do wondrous things (Psa. 72 : 18). It is our privilege then, like Epaphras, to agonize in prayer, and thus bring to pass wonderful events for the Wonderful One.

X

PRAYER TRIUMPHANT

X

PRAYER TRIUMPHANT

"They came — and worshipped him"

One day in Toronto, many years ago, my wife was sitting in her bedroom, sewing. Our youngest child, a boy of about four, sat upon the floor not far from his mother playing with his blocks. He had built houses and forts, and just then was erecting what must have been a castle. Block upon block the edifice went upward, until, in our boy's view, it was very imposing. But suddenly the little fellow stretched forth his hand, dashed the whole pile to the floor, got up, went to his mother's side, and leaned against her arm. There was great sympathy between the mother and her child, and for a time nothing was said by either. Then my wife, supposing that the dear lad had tired of his blocks and wanted some new playthings, said, "What is it, dear; what do you want?" At this, came this wonderful answer from the little fellow: "Oh, nothing, mother; I was just loving you, that's all!"

Ah, dear reader, I wonder how often you and I sweep aside our playthings, our tasks, our pleasures, even our service for God, and come to our heavenly

Father just to tell him of our love. Possibly he would be surprised if we should do this, he is so used to our seeking him in order that we may ask for new and more appealing gifts. But what a marvelous experience it would be both for him and us if we should so come, and if when he had asked us what we might desire we should say, "Nothing, Father; I am just loving Thee, that is all!" Surely there would be joy in the glory in such an hour, and on earth too, as Life would meet with life, and Heart with heart.

To ask and obtain is prayer effective. To give with no thought of obtaining is the sublimest attainment of prayer and is prayer triumphant. Let us respond then, and pray; and finally, in deep stillness and ineffable adoration, let us with Paul offer to God this praise:

"Now unto him that is able to do
exceedingly
abundantly
above all
that we ask or think,
according to the power that worketh in us,
unto him
be glory in the church
by Christ Jesus
throughout all ages,
world without end.
Amen!"

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